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Mid-Infrared Selection of AGN with the Wide-Field Infrared Survey Explorer. I. Characterizing WISE-Selected AGN in COSMOS

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ABSTRACT

The *Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE)* is an extremely capable and efficient black hole finder. We present a simple mid-infrared color criterion, $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ (i.e., $[3.4] - [4.6] \geq 0.8$, Vega), which identifies 61.9 ± 5.4 AGN candidates per deg² to a depth of $W2 \sim 15.0$. This implies a much larger census of luminous AGN than found by typical wide-area surveys, attributable to the fact that mid-infrared selection identifies both unobscured (type 1) and obscured (type 2) AGN. Optical and soft X-ray surveys alone are highly biased towards only unobscured AGN, while this simple *WISE* selection likely identifies even heavily obscured, Compton-thick AGN. Using deep, public data in the COSMOS field, we explore the properties of *WISE*-selected AGN candidates. At the mid-infrared depth considered, 160 μ Jy at 4.6 μ m, this simple criterion identifies 78% of *Spitzer* mid-infrared AGN candidates according to the criteria of Stern et al. (2005) and the reliability is 95%. We explore the demographics, multiwavelength properties and redshift distribution of *WISE*-selected AGN candidates in the COSMOS field.

Subject headings: surveys: infrared — AGN

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1. Introduction

Most surveys for AGN are severely biased towards unobscured (type 1) AGN. Nuclear emission in such sources dominates over host galaxy light at most wavelengths, making type 1 AGN both more readily identifiable and easier to follow-up spectroscopically. However, models predict a large population of obscured (type 2) AGN, outnumbering type 1 AGN by a factor of ~ 3 (e.g., Comastri et al. 1995; Treister et al. 2004; Ballantyne et al. 2011). Determining the ratio of unobscured to obscured AGN as a function of luminosity and redshift has direct implications for the growth history of supermassive black holes in galactic centers, as well as for the origin of the cosmic X-ray background (and, at a $\sim 10\%$ level, optical and infrared backgrounds). Furthermore, recent theoretical work suggests that AGN feedback plays a dominant role in establishing the present-day appearances of galaxies (e.g., Silk & Rees 1998; Hopkins et al. 2008). With the dominant population of obscured AGN severely underrepresented by current studies, however, a full understanding of the interplay between AGN feedback and galaxy formation is hampered.

The most promising photometric techniques for identifying luminous type 2 AGN are radio selection, hard X-ray selection and mid-infrared selection. However, only $\sim 10\%$ of AGN are radio-loud (e.g., Stern et al. 2000b) and the current generation of hard X-ray satellites have limited sensitivity. Specifically, recent surveys with *Swift* and *INTEGRAL* have only identified a few dozen heavily obscured (e.g., Compton-thick) AGN, all at very low redshift, $z \approx 0$ (e.g., Bassani et al. 1999; Vignali & Comastri 2002; Ajello et al. 2008; Tueller et al. 2008; Burningham et al. 2011). The *Nuclear Spectroscopic Telescope Array (NuSTAR)* (Harrison et al. 2010), scheduled for launch in early 2012, will improve that hard X-ray (~ 30 keV) sensitivity by a factor of ~ 200 , but with a field of view comparable to *Chandra/ACIS*, *NuSTAR* will only undertake a limited number of extragalactic surveys, unlikely to cover more than a few square degrees of sky. With mid-infrared sensitivities several orders of magnitude greater than the *Infrared Astronomical Satellite (IRAS)*, the *Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE)* (Wright et al. 2010) promises the first sensitive full-sky survey for both type 1 and type 2 luminous AGN.

WISE launched on UT 2009 December 14 and completed its first survey of the entire sky on UT 2010 July 17, obtaining a minimum coverage of five exposures per sky position over 95% of the sky in four passbands, 3.4, 4.6, 12 and 22 μm (*W1*, *W2*, *W3* and *W4*). The all-sky data release occurred on 2012 March 14, releasing all data taken during the *WISE* full cryogenic mission phase¹¹. The median depth-of-coverage is 15.6 exposures per sky position for *W1* and *W2*, and 14.8 exposures per sky position for *W3* and *W4*. Accounting for source confusion, the estimated sensitivities are 0.068, 0.098, 0.86 and 5.4 mJy (5σ), respectively (Wright et al. 2010). The corresponding Vega magnitude limits are 16.83, 15.60, 11.32, and 8.0, respectively. The depth increases with ecliptic latitude, reaching more than five times greater sensitivity near the ecliptic poles (Jarrett et al. 2011). In order of increasing wavelength, the imaging resolution (FWHM) is 6''.1, 6''.4, 6''.5 and 12''.0

¹¹See <http://wise2.ipac.caltech.edu/docs/release/allsky/>.

for the four bands.

Similar to the UV-excess method of identifying quasars (e.g., Schmidt & Green 1983), mid-infrared selection of AGN relies on distinguishing the approximately power-law AGN spectrum from the black body stellar spectrum of galaxies which peaks at rest-frame $1.6\mu\text{m}$. Mid-infrared data easily separate AGN from stars and galaxies, with the added benefit that mid-infrared selection is less susceptible to dust extinction and is sensitive to the highest redshift sources. Courtesy the unprecedented sensitivity and mapping efficiency of the Infrared Array Camera (IRAC; Fazio et al. 2004) onboard the *Spitzer Space Telescope*, the past few years have seen an explosion of research using mid-infrared observations to find and study (obscured) AGN at high redshift (e.g., Lacy et al. 2004, 2007; Stern et al. 2005; Alonso-Herrero et al. 2006; Barmby et al. 2006; Martínez-Sansigre et al. 2006, 2007; Donley et al. 2007, 2008, 2012; Dey et al. 2008; Fiore et al. 2008, 2009; Hatziminaoglou et al. 2008; Rigopoulou et al. 2009; Seymour et al. 2007; De Breuck et al. 2010; Eckart et al. 2010; Park et al. 2010). IRAC identification of AGN typically required all four passbands of that instrument, with data out to $8\mu\text{m}$, to differentiate AGN from high-redshift ($z \gtrsim 1.3$) massive galaxies. This is because distant, massive galaxies have red observed colors from 3 to $5\mu\text{m}$ (e.g., Lacy et al. 2004; Stern et al. 2005; Donley et al. 2007, 2012; Hickox et al. 2009; Galametz et al. 2012) and even very shallow (< 90 sec) IRAC pointings easily reach well below the characteristic brightness of early-type galaxies out to $z \sim 2$, $m_{4.5}^* \approx 16.7$ (e.g., Mancone et al. 2010). Courtesy of its shallow observations, *WISE* suffers less pronouncedly from such contamination and therefore is able to robustly identify AGN with just the two bluest, most sensitive channels.

Fig. 1 illustrates *WISE* selection of AGN. As anticipated prior to the launch of *WISE* in Ashby et al. (2009), Assef et al. (2010) and Eckart et al. (2010), a simple $W1 - W2$ color cut robustly differentiates AGN from stars and galaxies. Since the public release of *WISE* data, several teams have also noted the efficiency with which *WISE* identifies AGN (e.g., D’Abrusco et al. 2012; Edelson & Malkan 2012; Massaro et al. 2012), though these analyses have used the full four-band *WISE* photometry. Using the empirical AGN and galaxy spectral templates of Assef et al. (2010), Fig. 1 shows how $W1 - W2$ color evolves with redshift. The left panel considers a pure AGN template with increasing amounts of dust extinction while the right panel considers an unobscured AGN increasingly diluted by stellar emission (modeled with the elliptical galaxy, or E, template). AGN fraction refers to the fraction of the integrated emission in the rest-frame $0.1 - 30\mu\text{m}$ range of the unextincted templates which comes from the AGN.

Out to $z \sim 3.5$, pure AGN have red $W1 - W2$ mid-infrared colors. Beyond this redshift, the templates become blue as the $\sim 1\mu\text{m}$ minimum in the AGN template shifts into the $W2$ band (see also Richards et al. 2006a). $\text{H}\alpha$ emission shifting into the $W1$ band plays an additional role in causing blue $W1 - W2$ colors for AGN at $z \gtrsim 3.4$ (Assef et al. 2010). Even modest amounts of dust extinction redden the observed $W1 - W2$ colors for high-redshift AGN. Heavily extincted pure AGN are extremely red; for example, a pure AGN reddened by $E(B - V) = 15$ has $W1 - W2 > 2$ at all redshifts. Mid-infrared selection of AGN is remarkably robust at identifying pure AGN regardless of redshift. Indeed, Blain et al. (2012) report on the *WISE* detection of many of the highest redshift,

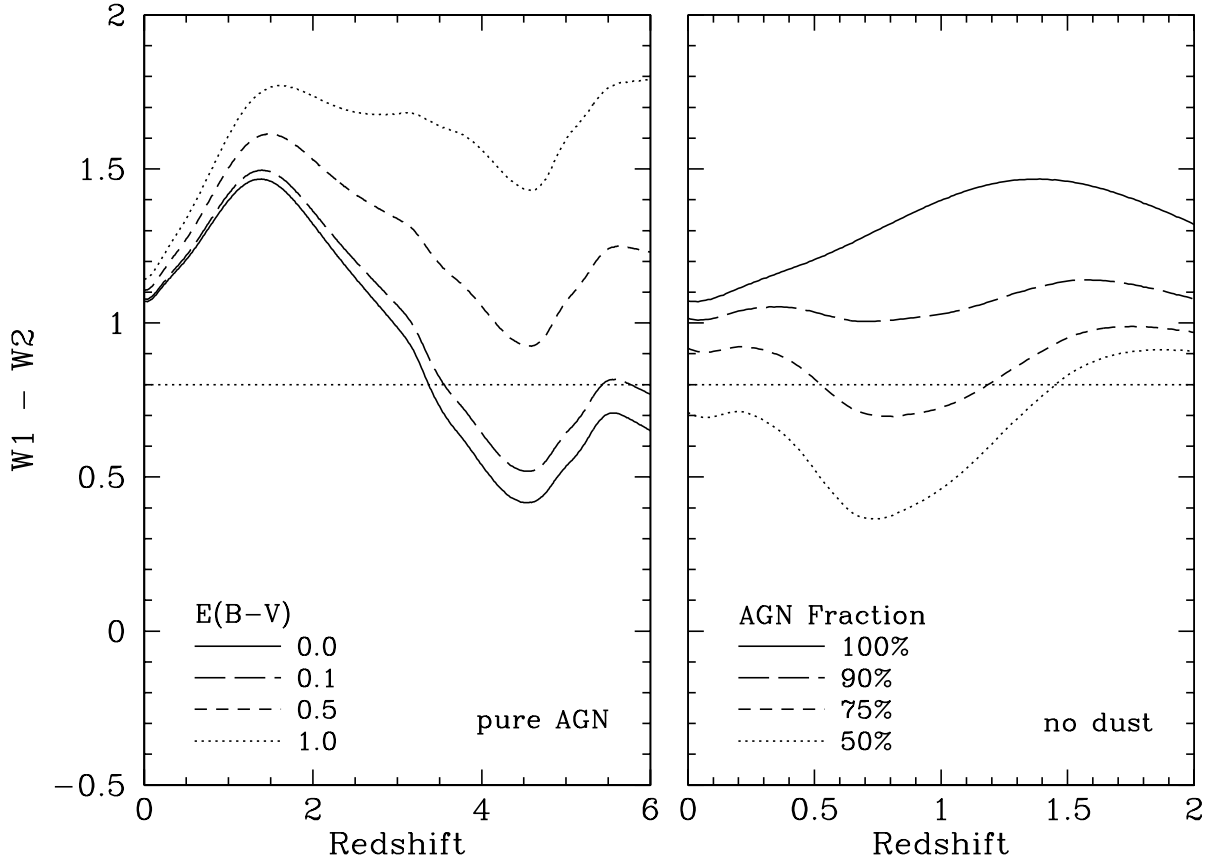


Fig. 1.— Model colors of AGN as a function of redshift using the templates of Assef et al. (2010; Vega magnitudes). The left panel shows a pure AGN template with increasing amounts of dust extinction. The right panel shows an unextinguished AGN diluted by increasing amounts of host galaxy light, where the host is the early-type (E) template from Assef et al. (2010); changing galaxy template has minimal effect. A simple color criterion of $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ identifies pure AGN out to $z \sim 3$ and extinguished pure AGN out to higher redshifts. For unextinguished AGN, sources are no longer selected as the host galaxy becomes an increasing fraction of the bolometric luminosity.

$z > 6$ quasars known, including the recently discovered $z = 7.085$ quasar from the United Kingdom Infrared Deep Sky Survey (UKIDSS; Mortlock et al. 2011). That quasar, the most distant currently known, has $W1 - W2 \sim 1.2$.

In contrast, normal galaxies and Galactic sources are unlikely to present such red $W1 - W2$ colors. The galaxy templates of Assef et al. (2010) are blue in this *WISE* color combination, with $W1 - W2 \leq 0.8$ out to $z \sim 1.2$. Given the shallow sensitivity of *WISE*, only the tip of the galaxy luminosity function will be well-detected by *WISE* at higher redshifts, particularly when

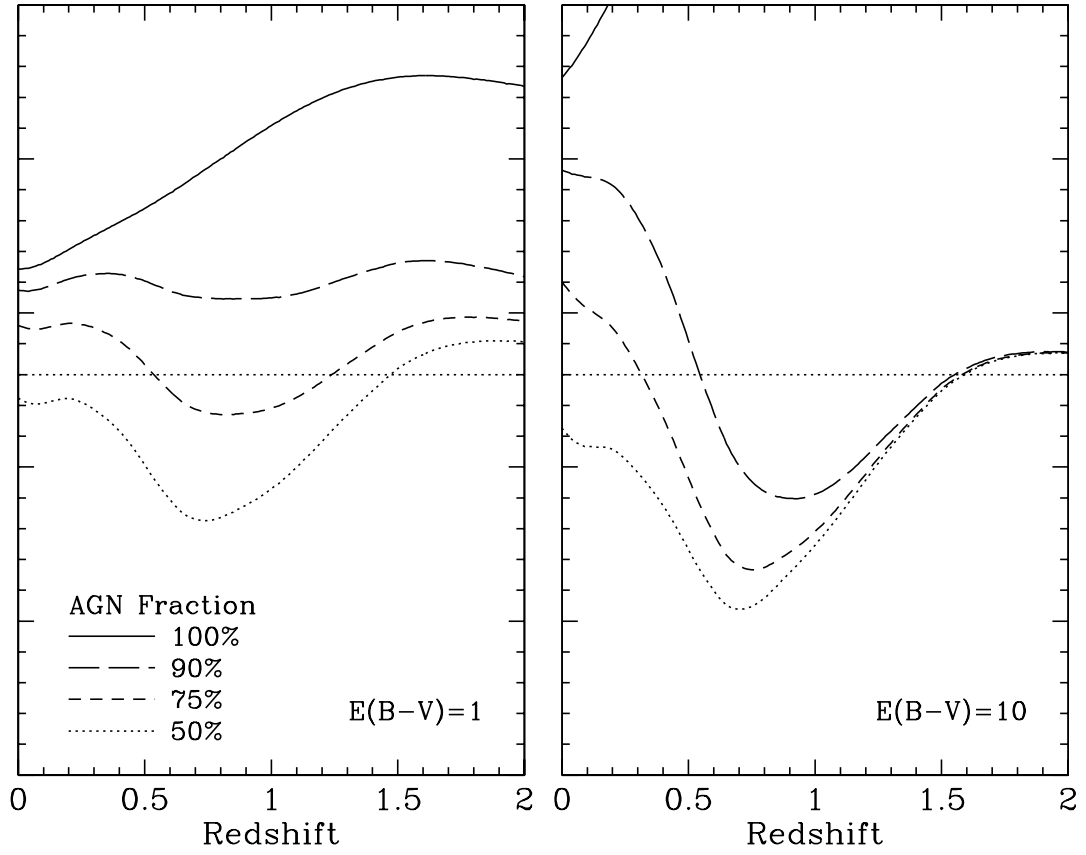


Fig. 2.— Model colors of an extinguished AGN as a function of redshift for increasing contributions of host galaxy light. As per Fig. 1, models use the AGN and early-type (E) galaxy templates of Assef et al. (2010; Vega magnitudes); changing the galaxy template has minimal effect. The left panel shows a modestly extinguished AGN with $E(B - V) = 1$, corresponding to $N_H \sim 6 \times 10^{22} \text{ cm}^{-2}$, while the right panels shows a heavily extinguished AGN with $E(B - V) = 10$, corresponding to $N_H \sim 6 \times 10^{23} \text{ cm}^{-2}$. For modest levels of extinction, the results are essentially unchanged from the right panel of Fig. 1: a simple color criterion of $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ identifies AGN-dominated galaxies so long as the AGN fraction is $\gtrsim 80\%$. For heavily extinguished AGN, including Compton-thick AGN ($N_H \gtrsim 10^{24} \text{ cm}^{-2}$), the mid-infrared emission becomes dominated by the host galaxy above redshifts of a few tenths, essentially regardless of AGN fraction, making it difficult to distinguish such systems from normal galaxies.

the analysis is restricted to the very conservative, 10σ flux limit ($W2 \sim 15.0$) we apply in this paper. In terms of Galactic contamination, only the coolest brown dwarfs and the most heavily dust-reddened stars will exhibit such red *WISE* colors. Kirkpatrick et al. (2011) show that stars of spectral class later (e.g., cooler) than $\sim T1$ have $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$; these red colors are caused

by methane absorption in the *W1* band (see also Cushing et al. 2011). In a high Galactic latitude survey, neither cool brown dwarfs nor dust-reddened stars will be significant contaminants at the flux limit of *WISE*.

As seen in the right panel of Fig. 1, dilution by the host galaxy will cause blue *W1* – *W2* colors, making less powerful AGN no longer identifiable using this simple *WISE* color criterion. This illustrates a powerful synergy between X-ray and mid-infrared surveys. While sensitive soft X-ray (≤ 10 keV) surveys are quite powerful at identifying even low-luminosity AGN since stellar processes are unlikely to power X-ray emission at luminosities greater than $\sim 10^{42}$ erg s $^{-1}$ (e.g., Stern et al. 2002a; Brandt & Hasinger 2005), such surveys are not sensitive to heavily obscured AGN since the low energy X-rays are readily absorbed and scattered. This is particularly true for heavily obscured low-redshift sources; higher redshift obscured AGN are helped by advantageous *k*-corrections (e.g., Stern et al. 2002b). Mid-infrared surveys, in contrast, readily identify the most heavily obscured, luminous AGN since the obscuring material is thermally heated by the AGN and emits relatively unimpeded by dust extinction. However, dilution by the host galaxy limits mid-infrared surveys from identifying low luminosity AGN. Optical photometric surveys are the most heavily biased, with a sensitivity largely restricted to the least obscured, most luminous AGN. Using data from deep *Chandra* and *Spitzer* imaging of targeted surveys, significant advances have come in recent years at understanding the full census of AGN (e.g., Polletta et al. 2006; Hickox et al. 2007; Fiore et al. 2008; Gorjian et al. 2008; Comastri et al. 2011; Hickox et al. 2011; Mullaney et al. 2011). Combining *WISE* with soft X-ray data from the all-sky eROSITA telescope on *Spectrum Röntgen Gamma (SRG)* (Predehl et al. 2010), expected to launch in late 2013, will extend the results of these targeted surveys across the full sky.

How will *WISE* perform at identifying the most heavily obscured, Compton-thick AGN? Assuming an SMC-like gas-to-dust ratio ($N_H \sim 2 \times 10^{22}$ cm $^{-2}$ mag $^{-1}$; Maiolino et al. 2001), $N_H \sim 10^{24}$ cm $^{-2}$ corresponds to $A_V \sim 50$, or $E(B - V) \sim 15$ for $R_V \sim 3.1$ (e.g., Cardelli et al. 1989; Gordon & Clayton 1998; York et al. 2006). As can be inferred from the left panel of Fig. 1, such heavily obscured AGN will have very red *W1* – *W2* colors at any redshift. However, host galaxy dilution in these bands will become significant as extreme obscuration hides the AGN. As shown in Fig. 2, the effect is subtle for modestly extincted sources with $N_H \lesssim 6 \times 10^{22}$ cm $^{-2}$, corresponding to $E(B - V) \lesssim 1$. Such AGN should be readily identifiable from their *W1* – *W2* colors so long as the AGN is bolometrically dominant. However, the blue mid-infrared colors of the host stellar populations across these *WISE* bands will make low-redshift, heavily obscured AGN difficult to identify at mid-infrared wavelengths. At higher redshifts, $z \gtrsim 1.5$, the host galaxy becomes red across these bands, but also fades below the detection limit of *WISE*. The most heavily-obscured AGN are most likely best identified using the longer wavelength *WISE* passbands. However, the cost is that the diminished sensitivity of those bands limits searches to the most luminous sources. Indeed, Eisenhardt et al. (2012) report on a *WISE*-selected source which is undetected in *W1* and *W2*, but has very red *W2* – *W3* colors. Similarly selected sources are further discussed in Bridge et al. (2012) and Wu et al. (2012); we find only ~ 1000 such extreme sources across the full sky.

This paper reports on *WISE*-selected AGN in the Cosmic Evolution Survey (COSMOS; Scoville et al. 2007). We use this well studied field, which includes deep, public, panchromatic imaging from the radio to the X-ray in order to both establish *WISE* AGN selection criteria and to understand the multi-wavelength properties of *WISE*-selected AGN. Our selection criterion identifies 130 AGN candidates in COSMOS, which is sufficient for some investigations but is too small for evolutionary studies. A companion paper, Assef et al. (2012), uses the wider area Boötes field in order to investigate the luminosity distribution and evolution of *WISE*-selected AGN.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses how the *WISE* and COSMOS data were matched, and motivates the simple $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ criterion we use to identify AGN candidates. Section 3 describes the multiwavelength properties of *WISE*-selected AGN, ranging from their demographics to their *Hubble Space Telescope* morphologies to their redshift distribution. As part of this investigation, we obtained Keck spectroscopy of mid-infrared selected AGN candidates in the COSMOS field, described in § 3.7. Section 4 summarizes our results. Since COSMOS is a well-studied field, of interest to a broad segment of the astrophysical community, we include an Appendix tabulating 26 additional COSMOS sources for which we obtained spectroscopic redshifts.

Unless otherwise specified, we use Vega magnitudes throughout and adopt the concordance cosmology, $\Omega_M = 0.3$, $\Omega_\Lambda = 0.7$ and $H_0 = 70 \text{ km s}^{-1} \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$.

2. WISE Selection of AGN in the COSMOS Field

2.1. Matching WISE with S-COSMOS

The *Spitzer*-COSMOS survey (S-COSMOS; Sanders et al. 2007) carried out a deep (620 hr), uniform survey of the full 2 deg^2 COSMOS field in all seven *Spitzer* bands (3.6, 4.5, 5.8, 8.0, 24, 70 and $160 \mu\text{m}$). The IRAC portion of the survey covered the field to a depth of 1200 s in the four bluest bands of *Spitzer*, with 5σ measured sensitivities ranging from $0.9 \mu\text{Jy}$ at $3.6 \mu\text{m}$ to $14.6 \mu\text{Jy}$ at $8.0 \mu\text{m}$. The longer wavelength observations, obtained with the Multiband Imaging Photometer for *Spitzer* (MIPS; Rieke et al. 2004), reach 5σ sensitivities of approximately 0.07, 8.5 and 65 mJy for the 24, 70, and $160 \mu\text{m}$ arrays, respectively (Frayser et al. 2009). These depths are all considerably deeper than *WISE*.

We identified 6261 unique *WISE* sources with signal-to-noise ratio $SNR \geq 10$ in *WISE* band *W2* in a region that extends slightly beyond the field of view (FoV) of the S-COSMOS survey. We used a preliminary version of the second pass data, which co-adds all observations from the *WISE* mission. In order to avoid spurious and poorly photometered sources, we limited the sample to relatively isolated sources by requiring blend flag $NB \leq 2$. We also avoided contaminated or confused sources by eliminating sources whose *W1* or *W2* photometry was affected by diffraction spikes ($ccflag = D$), persistence ($ccflag = P$), scattered light haloes from nearby bright sources ($ccflag = H$), or optical ghosts ($ccflag = O$) (for a detailed description of *WISE* catalog variables,

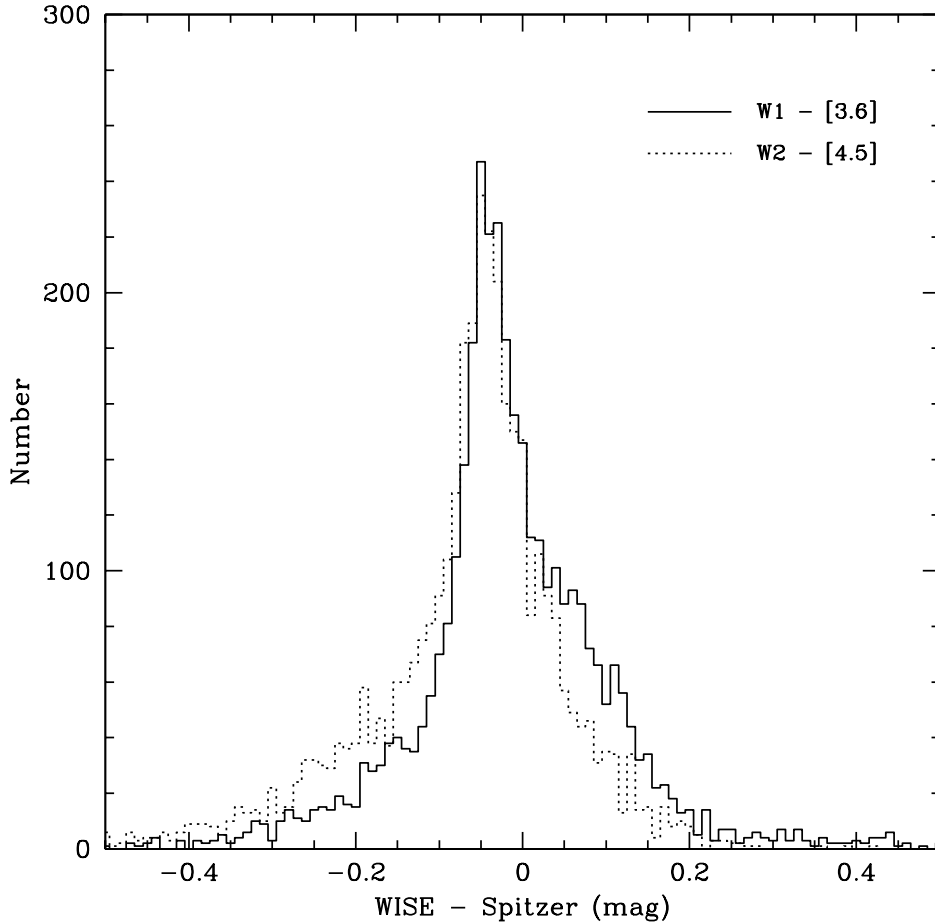


Fig. 3.— Distribution of offsets between *WISE* and S-COSMOS photometry for the two bluest *WISE* passbands: $W1 - [3.6]$ is plotted as a solid line, $W2 - [4.5]$ is plotted as a dotted line.

see Wright et al. 2010). The preliminary version of the second pass data we used double counts sources in the overlap regions between processing stripes. Using a $0''.5$ match radius, we identified duplicated sources in this preliminary catalog and only retained the source with higher signal-to-noise ratio in *W1*. The conservative (10σ) *W2* depth we apply corresponds to an approximate flux density limit of 15.05 mag ($\sim 160 \mu\text{Jy}$) at $4.6 \mu\text{m}$. Most sources are also detected at $\geq 10\sigma$ at $3.4 \mu\text{m}$, corresponding to 16.45 mag ($\sim 70 \mu\text{Jy}$).

We then identified the nearest S-COSMOS source to each *WISE* source. We required detections in both IRAC channel 1 ($3.6 \mu\text{m}$) and channel 2 ($4.5 \mu\text{m}$) in order to avoid the edges of S-COSMOS which did not receive full four-band IRAC coverage. We also eliminated saturated stars with the requirement $[3.6] \geq 11$. Correcting for the small mean astrometric offset between *WISE* and S-COSMOS, $\langle \Delta\text{R.A.} \rangle = 0''.108$ and $\langle \Delta\text{Dec.} \rangle = 0''.008$, and requiring a conservative $1''.0$ matching radius, we find unique, unsaturated, multi-band S-COSMOS identifications for 3618 *WISE* sources. Most of the *WISE* sources lacking S-COSMOS counterparts are from outside the S-COSMOS FoV.

Within the area of good, unique matches, 4% of *WISE* sources do not have S-COSMOS counterparts and $< 1\%$ of *WISE* sources have multiple S-COSMOS counterparts within the $1''.0$ matching radius. Visual inspection shows that confusion is the source of both of these issues, with the lower resolution *WISE* images merging multiple objects. In the remainder of the paper, we restrict the analysis to the $\sim 95\%$ of *WISE* sources within the S-COSMOS area with unique, unsaturated multi-band IRAC identifications.

Fig. 3 shows the measured differences between the *WISE* and S-COSMOS photometry. For S-COSMOS, we use aperture-corrected $2''.9$ photometry from the public June 2007 catalog, converted from physical units to Vega magnitudes using conversion factors prescribed by the S-COSMOS documentation available through the Infrared Science Archive (IRSA). As expected given the slightly different central wavelengths and widths of the IRAC and *WISE* filters, we find slight median offsets between their respective photometric measurements: $(W1 - [3.6])_{\text{med}} = -0.01$ and $(W2 - [4.5])_{\text{med}} = -0.07$. The Explanatory Supplement to the *WISE* All-Sky Data Release¹² finds a color term from analysis of compact sources in the *Spitzer* SWIRE *XMM*-LSS field, $(W1 - [3.6]) \sim 0.4([3.6] - [4.5])$ (see Fig. 2 of §VI.3.a of the Explanatory Supplement).

2.2. Mid-Infrared Selection of AGN with Spitzer

Fig. 4 shows the IRAC color-color diagram for S-COSMOS sources with robust *WISE* counterparts. The figure shows the expected concentration of Galactic stars with Vega colors of zero. As discussed in Stern et al. (2007) and Eisenhardt et al. (2010), stars warmer than spectral class T3 all have essentially Rayleigh-Jeans continua in the IRAC passbands, leading to similar IRAC colors. Methane absorption causes redder $[3.6] - [4.5]$ colors for cooler brown dwarfs, leading to a vertical extension above the Galactic star locus. Few such sources are found by *WISE* over an area as small as COSMOS. The sources extending to the right of the stellar locus is dominated by low-redshift star-forming galaxies, where polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) emission causes red $[5.8] - [8.0]$ colors. Finally, as suggested in Eisenhardt et al. (2004) and discussed in detail in Stern et al. (2005), the vertical extension perpendicular to the galaxy sequence is dominated by AGN. Indeed, Gorjian et al. (2008) show that the majority (65%) of X-ray sources in the XBoötes survey are identified by the Stern et al. (2005) mid-infrared criteria (see also Donley et al. 2007; Eckart et al. 2010; Assef et al. 2011). In IRAC data plotted to deeper depths, a highly populated second vertical sequence is also visible to the left of the AGN sequence. This sequence, due to massive galaxies at $z \gtrsim 1.2$ (e.g., Stern et al. 2005; Eisenhardt et al. 2008; Papovich 2008), typically outnumbers the AGN sequence since even very shallow (< 90 sec) IRAC pointings easily reach well below the characteristic brightness of early-type galaxies out to $z \sim 2$, $m_{3.6}^* \approx 17.5$ and $m_{4.5}^* \approx 16.7$ (e.g., Mancone et al. 2010). However, these galaxies are absent with our conservative, $W2 \lesssim 15$ magnitude cut in the much shallower *WISE* data.

¹²See <http://wise2.ipac.caltech.edu/docs/release/allsky/expsup/index.html>.

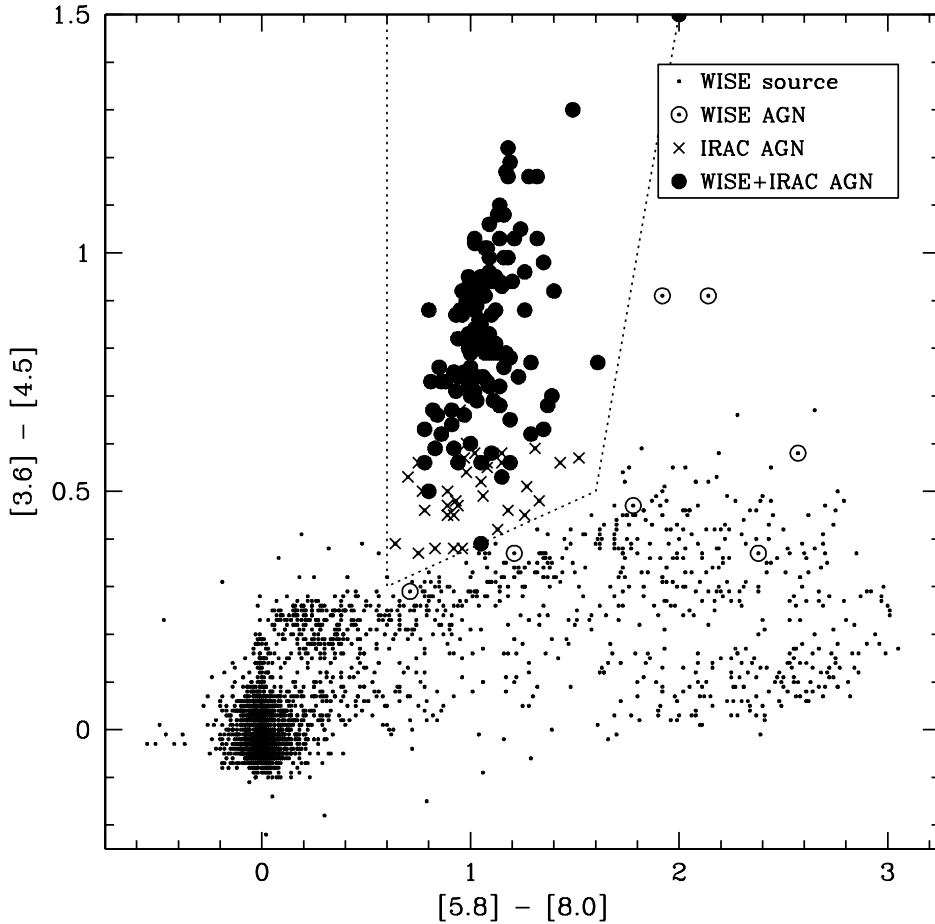


Fig. 4.— IRAC color-color diagram of *WISE*-selected sources in the COSMOS field. We only plot sources with $SNR \geq 10$ in $W1$ and $W2$, and we require $[3.6] > 11$ to avoid saturated stars. Sources with $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ are indicated with larger circles; filled circles indicate sources that were also identified as AGN using the Stern et al. (2005) mid-infrared color criteria. Sources identified as AGN using *Spitzer* criteria but not using the *WISE* criterion are indicated with exes.

In the following analysis we will adopt the Stern et al. (2005) mid-infrared AGN sample as the ‘truth sample’ in order to explore potential *WISE* AGN selection criteria. The Stern et al. (2005) method for selecting AGN was one of the first methods devised to identify AGN using *Spitzer* data and has been extensively used by other workers in the field. However, like all AGN selection criteria, it is not without some shortcomings, highlighted below.

X-ray selected AGN missed by mid-infrared selection: As pointed out by numerous authors (e.g., Barmby et al. 2006; Cardamone et al. 2008; Brusa et al. 2009), many X-ray sources have mid-infrared colors consistent with normal galaxies, and thus are missed by the mid-infrared AGN color criteria. As first pointed out by Donley et al. (2007) and further expanded upon by Eckart et al. (2010), the fraction of X-ray sources identified as mid-infrared AGN increases strongly with

X-ray luminosity. For example, Donley et al. (2007), using data from the Ms *Chandra* Deep Field-North (Alexander et al. 2003), find that the mid-infrared selection efficiency increases from $\sim 14\%$ at $L_{0.5-8\text{keV}} < 10^{42} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$ to 100% at $L_{0.5-8\text{keV}} > 10^{44} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$. So while low-luminosity AGN are, unsurprisingly, missed by the mid-infrared color selection criteria (e.g., Figs. 1 and 2), such criteria appear remarkably robust at identifying the most luminous AGN in the universe.

Contamination by star-forming galaxies: Several authors have also pointed out that the mid-infrared color cuts proposed by Lacy et al. (2004) and Stern et al. (2005) extend into regions of color space populated by star-forming galaxies (e.g., Barmby et al. 2006; Donley et al. 2008; Park et al. 2010). In order to minimize such contamination, mid-infrared power-law selection has been suggested (e.g., Alonso-Herrero et al. 2006), though Donley et al. (2012) notes that systematic photometric errors from IRAC are often underestimated (e.g., Reach et al. 2005), making power-law selection more vulnerable to the quality of the mid-infrared photometry than simple color-color cuts. Donley et al. (2012) investigates contamination by star-forming galaxies using a combination of galaxy templates and real data from pure starbursts identified from *Spitzer* IRS spectroscopy. A strong conclusion from this work is that mid-infrared color selection, particularly using the Stern et al. (2005) criteria, has minimal contamination from purely star-forming galaxies below a redshift of $z \sim 1$.

Contamination by high-redshift galaxies: The Lacy et al. (2004) and Stern et al. (2005) criteria for identifying AGN based on their mid-infrared colors were empirically derived from shallow, wide-area *Spitzer* data. In this limit, the criteria work extremely well. In deeper mid-infrared data, however, significant contamination from faint, high-redshift galaxies becomes problematic and we recommend use of the revised IRAC selection criteria of Donley et al. (2012) for deep IRAC data.

Completeness vs. reliability: Finally, in choosing between the IRAC color criteria of Lacy et al. (2004) and Stern et al. (2005), we have opted for the latter. As pointed out by numerous authors (e.g., Eckart et al. 2010; Donley et al. 2012), the less selective Lacy et al. (2004) criteria have higher completeness at the cost of reliability: many more normal galaxies are identified using those criteria, yielding more significant contamination. With the primary goal of identifying a clean sample of powerful AGN, we therefore adopt the higher reliability IRAC color criteria of Stern et al. (2005).

In summary, we adopt the Stern et al. (2005) mid-infrared-selected AGN candidates as the ‘truth sample’ for analyzing *WISE* selection of AGN. Foremost, identifying a robust truth sample identified at similar wavelength makes logical sense. Radio selection would miss $\sim 90\%$ of AGN, while optical and X-ray selection would miss the heavily obscured AGN which are identified by mid-infrared selection but largely missed by the current generation of optical and X-ray surveys. In principle, a hybrid selection could be adopted, such as identifying all AGN candidates with L_{AGN} greater than some value. However, a ‘truth sample’ identified in that manner would be vulnerable to spectroscopic incompleteness.

Despite these caveats to mid-infrared selection, we show that the Stern et al. (2005) criteria are quite robust at the shallow mid-infrared depths of *WISE*. This method identifies the most luminous X-ray-selected AGN at high completeness. It also identifies a much higher surface density of AGN than optical and X-ray surveys of comparable depth due to an increased sensitivity to obscured AGN. Illustrating this point, Hickox et al. (2007) and Eckart et al. (2010) show that mid-infrared AGN candidates individually undetected at high energy are well detected in stacking analyses and reveal a harder-than-average X-ray spectrum, implying significant obscuration. Optical spectroscopy of IRAC-selected AGN candidates also typically reveal type 2 AGN spectra (Stern et al., in prep.). Finally, in shallow mid-infrared data, particularly at the depth of *WISE*, the Stern et al. (2005) criteria suffer from minimal contamination by Galactic stars, starburst galaxies, or high-redshift galaxies.

2.3. Mid-Infrared Selection of AGN with WISE

Fig. 5 shows a hybrid mid-infrared color-color diagram. Rather than plotting IRAC [3.6]–[4.5] color along the vertical axis, we plot $W1 - W2$. We see similar trends to the IRAC-only diagram (Fig. 4), with a stellar locus at zero color, a horizontal sequence of low-redshift galaxies, and a vertical AGN sequence perpendicular to the galactic sequence. While mid-infrared selection of AGN in even very shallow *Spitzer* pointings required the longer wavelength IRAC passbands to differentiate AGN from high-redshift ($z \gtrsim 1.3$) massive galaxies, *WISE* is able to robustly identify AGN with just $W1$ and $W2$ (e.g., see Ashby et al. 2009; Assef et al. 2010; Eckart et al. 2010). Note that these are the two most sensitive *WISE* passbands, with the highest source counts and the best spatial resolution.

We have explored how robustly *WISE* identifies AGN using a simple $W1 - W2$ color cut. Of the 3618 sources in our cross-matched *WISE*-S-COSMOS catalog, 157 are mid-infrared AGN according to the Stern et al. (2005) criteria. We consider this the truth sample and Fig. 6 shows the completeness and reliability of *WISE* AGN selection as a function of $W1 - W2$ color cut. Prior to the launch of *WISE*, Ashby et al. (2009) suggested $W1 - W2 \geq 0.5$ would robustly identify AGN while Assef et al. (2010) suggested a color cut of $W1 - W2 \geq 0.85$. Considering the former, while this criterion is highly (98%) complete at identifying the AGN sample, it suffers from significant contamination from non-active sources (see Fig. 6; only 50% of sources appear active according to the IRAC criteria). This is likely, in part, due to the significantly better performance of *WISE* compared to the prelaunch predictions: Mainzer et al. (2005) reported 5σ point source sensitivity requirements of $120 \mu\text{Jy}$ at $3.4 \mu\text{m}$ and $160 \mu\text{Jy}$ at $4.6 \mu\text{m}$, while we are finding 10σ point source sensitivities of $70 \mu\text{Jy}$ at $3.4 \mu\text{m}$ and $160 \mu\text{Jy}$ at $4.6 \mu\text{m}$. Analysis of Fig. 6 suggests a color cut at $W1 - W2 = 0.8$ offers an extremely robust AGN sample which is still highly complete. For some uses, a slightly less conservative color cut at $W1 - W2 = 0.7$ might be preferable, providing a powerful compromise between completeness and reliability for *WISE* AGN selection.

Using $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ to select AGN candidates, we identify 130 potential candidates, of

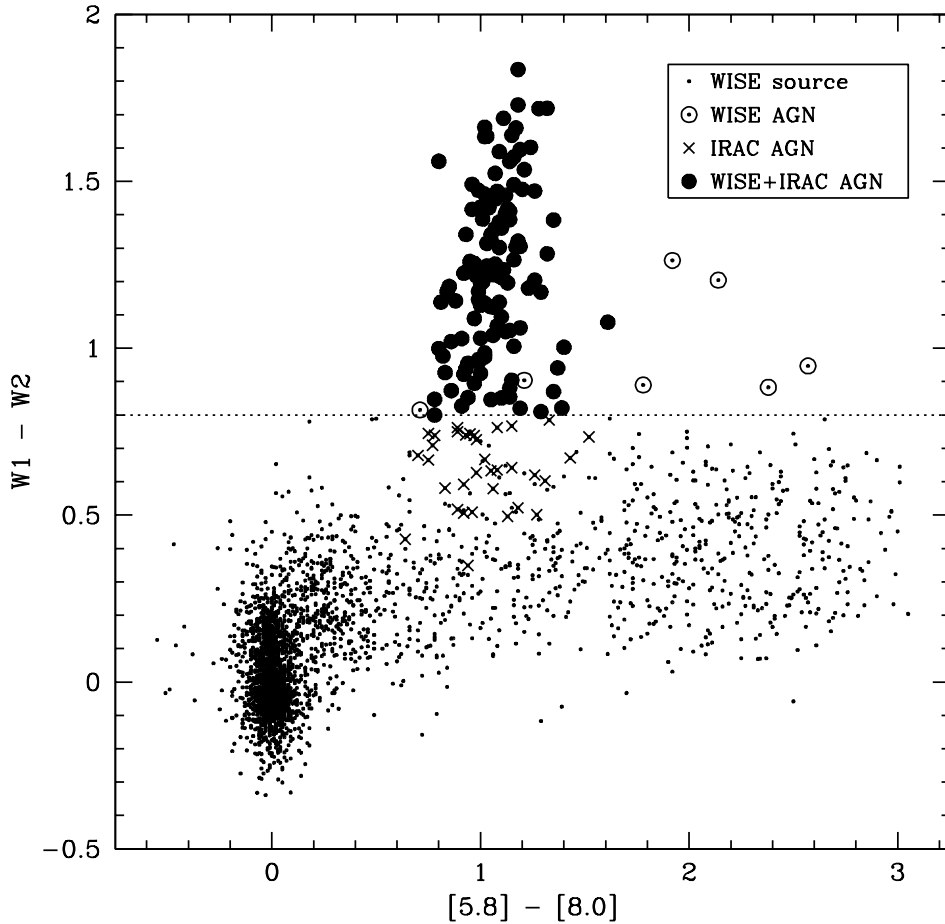


Fig. 5.— Mid-infrared color-color diagram of *WISE*-selected sources in the COSMOS field, with *WISE* $W1 - W2$ plotted against IRAC $[5.8] - [8.0]$. Symbols are as in the previous figure.

which 123 are AGN according to their IRAC colors (95% reliability, 78% completeness). The less conservative color cut at $W1 - W2 \geq 0.7$ identifies 160 candidates, of which 136 are AGN according to their IRAC colors (85% reliability, 87% completeness) — e.g., this less restrictive color cut identifies $\sim 10\%$ more AGN at the cost of tripling the number of contaminants. As seen in Fig. 4, several of the “mis-identified” AGN candidates have colors very close to the Stern et al. (2005) criteria. In fact, as discussed in § 3.7, four of the seven “contaminants” for the $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ AGN selection have spectroscopic redshifts, two of which are broad-lined quasars. This implies that the above reliability numbers are likely conservative, though complete spectroscopy will be required to determine what fraction of the IRAC-selected AGN are, in fact, not active. As seen in Fig. 5, mis-identified AGN candidates often have much redder $[5.8] - [8.0]$ colors, suggestive of low-redshift galaxies with PAH emission. Potential Galactic contaminants are brown dwarfs (cooler than spectral class T3) and asymptotic giant branch (AGB) stars, both of which have much lower surface densities than AGN at the depths probed and are not expected to be a significant

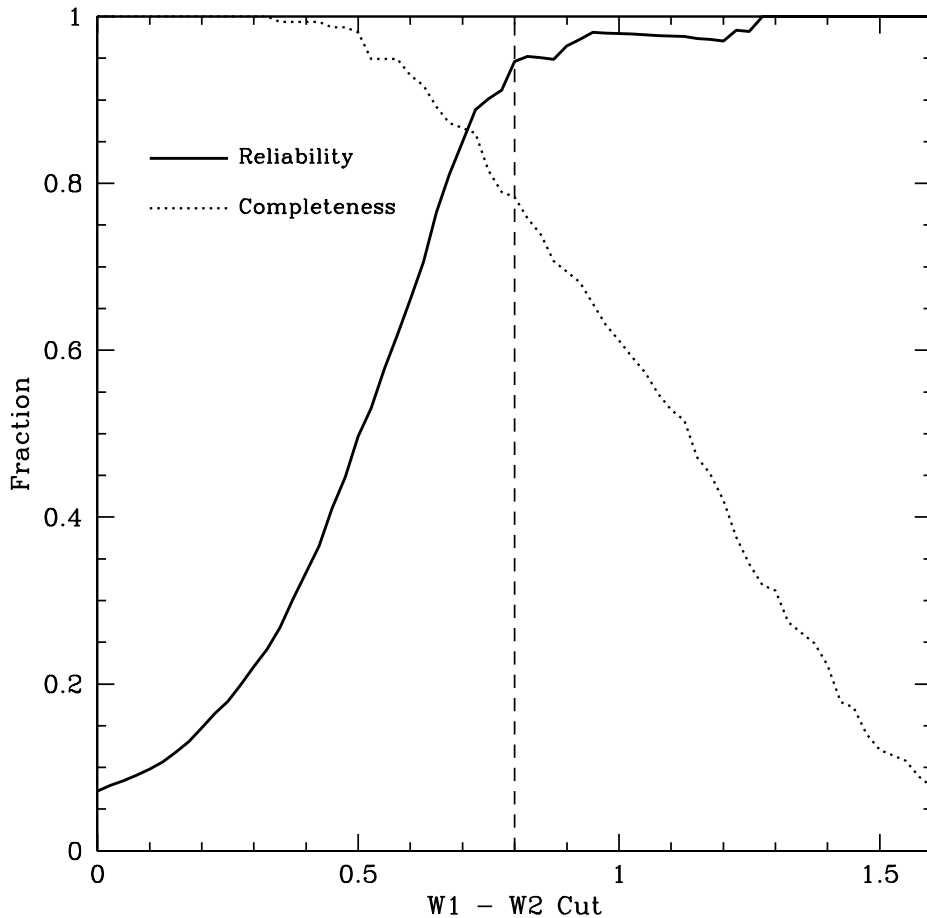


Fig. 6.— Reliability (solid line) and completeness (dotted line) of *WISE* AGN selection as a function of a simple $W1 - W2$ color selection. Blue cuts have very high completeness — e.g., select all sources which are identified as mid-infrared AGN candidates according to the Stern et al. (2005) IRAC criteria. However, blue cuts have poor reliability, selecting many sources whose mid-infrared colors suggest they are normal galaxies. Likewise, red cuts robustly select AGN with few contaminants, but have low completeness. Using the criteria $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ offers both high completeness (78%) and high reliability (95%).

contaminant, particularly in extragalactic pointings.

In the following section we use the extensive publicly available data in the COSMOS field to explore the demographics, multiwavelength properties and redshift distribution of *WISE*-selected AGN using the simple $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ color criterion.

3. Properties of WISE AGN

3.1. Demographics of WISE AGN

The effective area of the S-COSMOS survey is 2.3 deg^2 per passband after removal of poor quality regions around saturated stars and the field boundary (Sanders et al. 2007). Since approximately 8% of the field is only covered by two of the four IRAC passbands, this implies a four-band effective area of approximately 2.1 deg^2 . Our simple $W1 - W2$ color criterion identified 130 AGN candidates in this area, implying a surface density of 61.9 ± 5.4 *WISE*-selected AGN candidates per deg^2 , 5% of which are expected to be contaminants.

For comparison, the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS) quasar selection algorithm (Richards et al. 2002) targeted ultraviolet excess quasars to $i^* = 19.1$ (AB mag; 13.0 targets per deg^2) and higher redshift ($z \gtrsim 3$) quasars to $i^* = 20.2$ (AB mag; 7.7 targets per deg^2), yielding a combined list of 18.7 candidates per deg^2 . These depths are comparable to *WISE* depths for type 1 quasar selection (e.g., Assef et al. 2010). The SDSS algorithm is expected to provide over 90% completeness from simulated type 1 quasar spectra, although at the cost of lower reliability. The overall efficiency (quasars / quasar candidates) was only 66% from initial test data over 100 deg^2 , with the contaminants evenly split between galaxies and Galactic stars. Importantly, optical/UV quasar selection methods are hampered at certain redshifts, especially high ones, where the stellar locus overlaps the quasar locus in color-color space. More sophisticated approaches, such as that presented in Bovy et al. (2011), work better than the old two-color or three-color cuts, though they still have issues. Other methods, such as variability (e.g., Palanque-Delabrouille et al. 2011), also do better, but require more elaborate input data sets. *WISE* selection is less affected by these problems, and has a much flatter selection function as a function of redshift than traditional color-selected UV-excess methods. In particular, our simple $W1 - W2$ selection is expected to have 78% completeness and 95% reliability assuming that the Stern et al. (2005) mid-infrared selection of AGN candidates from the deeper S-COSMOS data is 100% reliable.

3.2. Mid-Infrared Properties of WISE AGN

We have studied the longer wavelength properties of *WISE*-selected AGN with an eye towards investigating whether the inclusion of $W3$ or $W4$ would allow for a more robust *WISE* selection of AGN, such as the wedge in $W1 - W2$ vs. $W2 - W3$ color-color space presented in Jarrett et al. (2011). Our simple $W1 - W2$ color criterion identified 130 AGN candidates in COSMOS, of which 24 (18%) are detected in $W3$ ($\geq 10\sigma$) and only 3 (2%) are detected in $W4$ ($\geq 10\sigma$). If we instead use a less conservative 5σ detection threshold, we find that 78 (60%) are detected in $W3$ and 17 (13%) are detected in $W4$. These percentages are essentially unchanged when we consider the 123 robust AGN candidates identified by both the *WISE* and IRAC selection criteria: 24 (20%) are detected in $W3$ ($\geq 10\sigma$) and 3 (2%) are detected in $W4$ ($\geq 10\sigma$). Using the 5σ detection threshold,

these numbers increase to 74 (60%) being detected in *W3* and 17 (14%) being detected detected in *W4*.

This implies that including the longer wavelength *WISE* data increases the reliability of the AGN selection, but at the cost of a significant decrease in completeness. For example, requiring a 10σ detection in *W3* in addition to the $W1 - W2$ color criterion provides a surface density of only 11 *WISE*-selected AGN candidates per deg^2 , but the reliability is expected to be $\sim 100\%$. Using the less conservative requirement of a 5σ detection in *W3* provides a surface density of 37 *WISE*-selected AGN candidates per deg^2 with a reliability of 95% – e.g., the same reliability as our original $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ color cut. Any of these mid-infrared selection criteria compare quite favorably with the SDSS quasar selection in terms of surface density, completeness and reliability. However, in what follows we rely on selecting AGN using only the single $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ color criterion, as this selection, relying on the most sensitive *WISE* passbands, identifies a much larger candidate AGN population, 2 to 5 times larger than the samples that also require *W3* detections.

Finally, we note that the depth of the *WISE* survey varies strongly with ecliptic latitude. The COSMOS field was selected to be at low ecliptic latitude in order to make it accessible from both hemispheres, and thus is close to the minimum depth of the *WISE* survey with a coverage of 12 frames (11 sec each). Higher latitude fields have deeper data, reaching a coverage of 250 frames at the ecliptic poles (Jarrett et al. 2011). This increases the surface density of AGN candidates, but with a decrease in robustness since deeper pointings will detect massive galaxies at $z \gtrsim 1$ which have similar $W1 - W2$ colors to AGN. The inclusion of the deeper *W3* data in such fields could be used to separate normal galaxies from AGN. *WISE* selection of AGN in deeper, higher latitude fields is addressed more thoroughly in Assef et al. (2012).

3.3. X-Ray Properties of WISE AGN

The COSMOS field has been observed by both the *Chandra X-Ray Observatory* (Elvis et al. 2009) and *XMM-Newton* (Hasinger et al. 2007). In the following two subsections, we examine the X-ray properties of *WISE*-selected AGN using each of these surveys.

3.3.1. Chandra Observations

The *Chandra*-COSMOS Survey (C-COSMOS; Elvis et al. 2009) is a large, 1.8 Ms, *Chandra* program that imaged the central 0.5 deg^2 of the COSMOS field with an effective exposure time of 160 ks per position and the outer 0.4 deg^2 with an effective exposure time of 80 ks per position. The corresponding point source depths in the deeper portion of the survey are $1.9 \times 10^{-16} \text{ ergs cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ in the soft (0.5 – 2 keV) band, $7.3 \times 10^{-16} \text{ ergs cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ in the hard (2 – 10 keV) band and $5.7 \times 10^{-16} \text{ ergs cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ in the full (0.5 – 10 keV) band, where these depths assume an average X-ray power law index $\Gamma = 1.4$. C-COSMOS detected 1761 reliable X-ray point sources (catalog

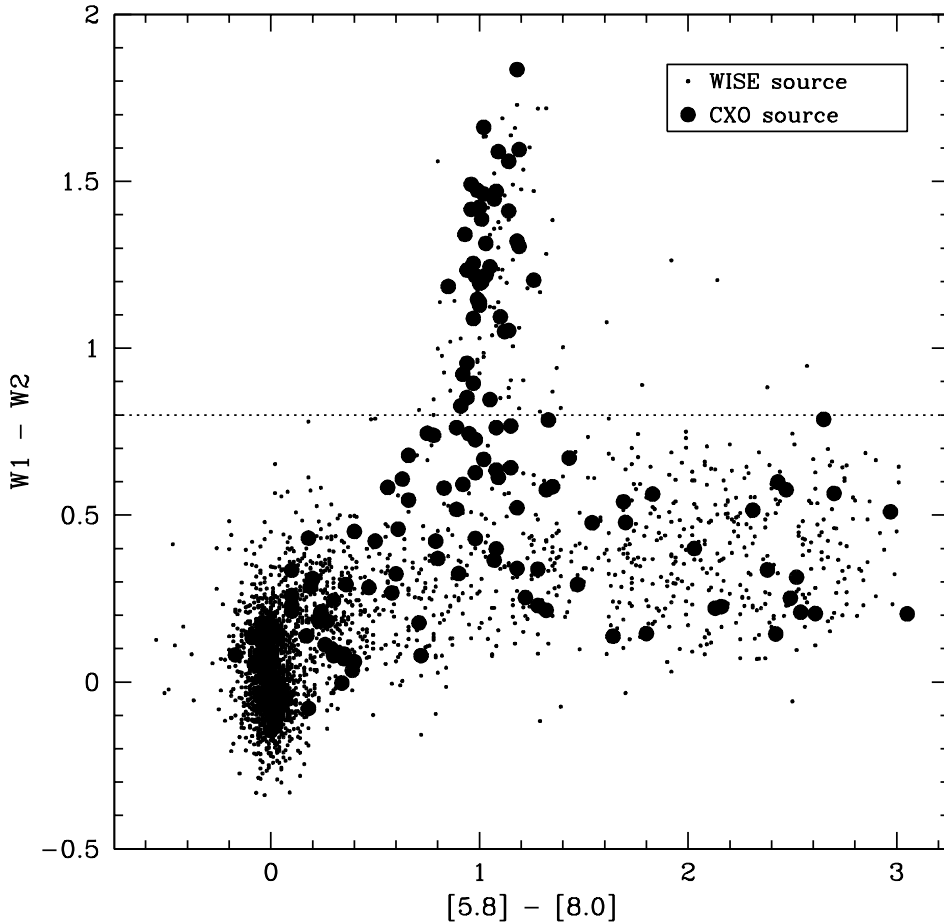


Fig. 7.— Mid-infrared color-color diagram of *WISE*-selected sources in the COSMOS field, with *WISE* $W1 - W2$ plotted against IRAC $[5.8] - [8.0]$. Many of the *WISE* sources lacking *Chandra* counterparts are from outside the field-of-view of the C-COSMOS survey.

ver.2.1; spurious probability $< 2 \times 10^{-5}$). We use a $2''.5$ matching radius to cross-identify the *WISE* and *Chandra* sources.

A total of 167 of the *Chandra* X-ray sources have *WISE* counterparts (Fig. 7). Most have relatively blue $W1 - W2$ colors and are likely associated with low-redshift galaxies harboring low-luminosity AGNs; such sources are common in deep X-ray observations (e.g., Brandt & Hasinger 2005). A concentration of X-ray sources near zero mid-infrared colors are predominantly low-redshift ($z \lesssim 0.6$) early-type galaxies: such galaxies have little or no star formation and therefore lack the dust and PAH emission which causes a horizontal extension in this mid-infrared color-color space. Finally, deep *Chandra* surveys are also sensitive to X-ray emission from low-mass Galactic stars, which likewise reside in this same region of color-color space (e.g., Stern et al. 2002a).

More interesting is the vertical extension seen in Fig. 7: 41 of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates have C-COSMOS counterparts. Most of the *WISE*+IRAC AGN candidates lacking *Chandra*

counterparts in Fig. 7 are from outside the C-COSMOS FoV. Six (e.g., 13%) of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates whose IRAC colors are consistent with the Stern et al. (2005) AGN selection criteria were observed by, but *not* detected by *Chandra*. We list these sources in Table 1. All are at least $9''$ from the nearest *Chandra* source. These mid-infrared sources are strong candidates for Compton-thick AGN (e.g., $N_H \geq 10^{24} \text{ cm}^{-2}$): sources with so much internal absorption that their X-ray emission below 10 keV is heavily absorbed, undetected in the ~ 100 ks *Chandra* observations. The absorbing material, however, is heated up and is easily detected in ~ 100 s integrations with *WISE*. We also note, as expected, that the small number of *WISE* AGN contaminants with $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ but whose IRAC colors are *not* consistent with an AGN are undetected by *Chandra*.

Fig. 8 shows the relationship between hard X-ray (2 – 10 keV) fluxes of S-COSMOS sources and their hardness ratios $HR \equiv (H - S)/(H + S)$, where H and S are the numbers of hard and soft X-ray photons detected, respectively. We compare the full sample (smallest black dots) to the subset with *WISE* counterparts (small black circles) to the smaller set of sources with IRAC and/or *WISE* colors indicative of AGN activity (larger symbols). Note that many of the brightest X-ray sources in the field are identified as AGN candidates by *WISE*, regardless of their hardness ratio.

3.3.2. *XMM-Newton* Observations

The *XMM-Newton* wide-field survey of the COSMOS field (*XMM*-COSMOS; Hasinger et al. 2007; Brusa et al. 2010) observed the entire 2 deg^2 COSMOS field to medium depth (~ 60 ks). The survey detected nearly 2000 X-ray sources down to limiting fluxes of $\sim 5 \times 10^{-16} \text{ ergs cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ in the 0.5 – 2 keV (soft) band and $\sim 3 \times 10^{-15} \text{ ergs cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ in the 2 – 10 keV (hard) band. Thus, *XMM*-COSMOS covers a wider area than C-COSMOS, albeit to shallower depth. We use the November 2008 *XMM-Newton* point-like source catalog, available thru IRSA, which contains 1887 sources.

Table 1. *WISE*+IRAC AGN candidates undetected by *Chandra*.

<i>WISE</i> ID	i	W1	W2	$W1 - W2$	[5.8]–[8.0]	z	Notes
J095855.40+022037.4	19.43	15.41	14.59	0.82	1.39	[0.38]	bright galaxy
J095937.35+021905.9	22.30	16.00	14.70	1.30	1.17	0.927	
J100006.19+015535.3	20.90	15.53	14.19	1.34	1.05	0.661	
J100043.70+014202.5	21.77	15.89	14.89	1.00	1.40	0.741	
J100046.91+020726.5	21.86	14.87	13.14	1.73	1.18	1.158	faint
J100135.61+022104.8	25.11	16.98	14.97	2.01	1.49	...	faint

Note. — Bracketed redshift indicates photometric redshift.

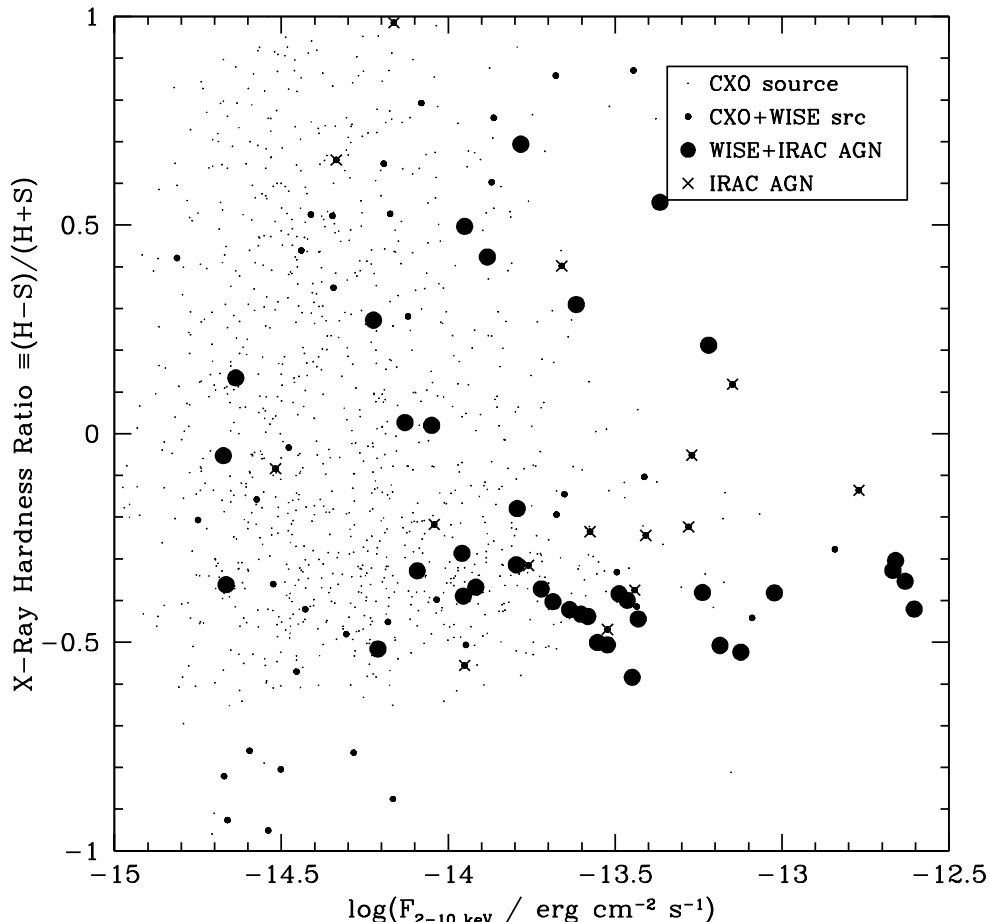


Fig. 8.— X-ray hardness ratio $HR \equiv (H - S)/(H + S)$, where H (S) is the number of detected hard (soft) X-ray counts, plotted against hard X-ray flux. All X-ray data is from *Chandra*; at the depth of these data, most X-ray sources are expected to be AGN. We identify no *Chandra* counterparts for the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates whose IRAC colors are indicative of being normal, non-active galaxies. Note that many (but not all) of the brightest hard X-ray sources are identified as AGN candidates by both *WISE* and IRAC.

Using a $3''.5$ matching radius — slightly larger than used for C-COSMOS to account for the poorer spatial resolution of *XMM-Newton* — we identify *WISE* counterparts for 244 *XMM*-COSMOS sources, of which 92 have $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$. The mid-infrared color distribution of *XMM* sources is similar to what was seen for C-COSMOS, though more of the mid-infrared AGN candidates have X-ray detections courtesy of the wider spatial coverage of this survey (Fig. 9). Thirty-three *WISE* sources whose IRAC colors suggest an active nucleus (out of 123) are undetected by *XMM-Newton*, though seven are from outside the *XMM-Newton* coverage; the other 26 are listed in Table 2. All six of the sources from Table 1 remain undetected by *XMM-Newton*.

Therefore, 75% of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates have *XMM-Newton* counterparts, but

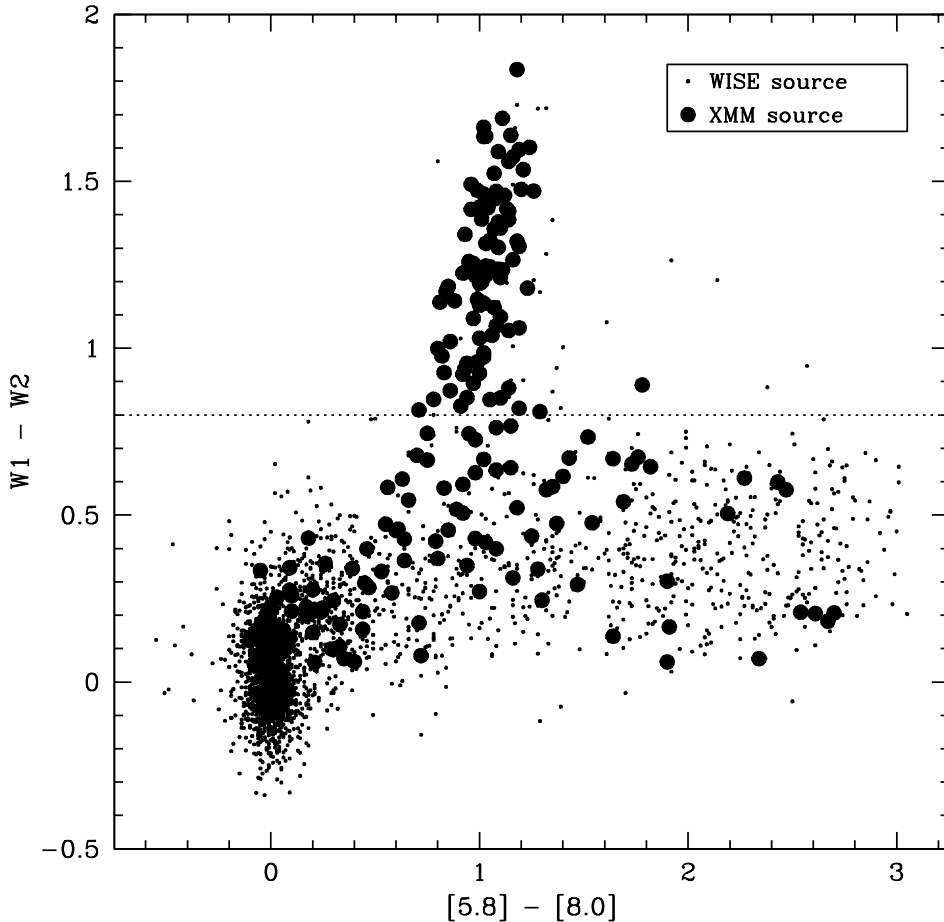


Fig. 9.— Mid-infrared color-color diagram of *WISE*-selected sources in the COSMOS field, with *WISE* $W1 - W2$ plotted against IRAC $[5.8] - [8.0]$. Dots show all *WISE* sources in the field, larger filled circles show *WISE* sources with *XMM* counterparts.

that still leaves a significant number of *WISE*-selected AGN — including those whose IRAC colors indicate an AGN — that are *undetected* by *XMM-Newton*. We also note that two of the sources with $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ but outside of the Stern et al. (2005) IRAC wedge are detected in the X-rays; both have IRAC colors very close to the wedge defined in that paper.

Similar to the *Chandra* results, we find that the *WISE*-selected AGN are brighter and have softer spectra than typical *XMM-Newton* sources in *XMM*-COSMOS. However, Fig. 10 also shows quite clearly that the brightest X-ray sources tend to be identified as AGN candidates from their *WISE* colors, regardless of X-ray hardness ratio. For comparison, we also plot the expected point source sensitivity of the all-sky eROSITA telescope. The brightest soft X-ray sources, $F_{0.5-2\text{keV}} \gtrsim 2 \times 10^{-14} \text{ erg cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$, will basically all already have been identified as AGN candidates by *WISE*. At the sensitivity limit of eROSITA, however, large numbers of X-ray sources are expected that are not identified by *WISE*; these are likely lower luminosity AGN at lower redshifts (e.g., Eckart et al.

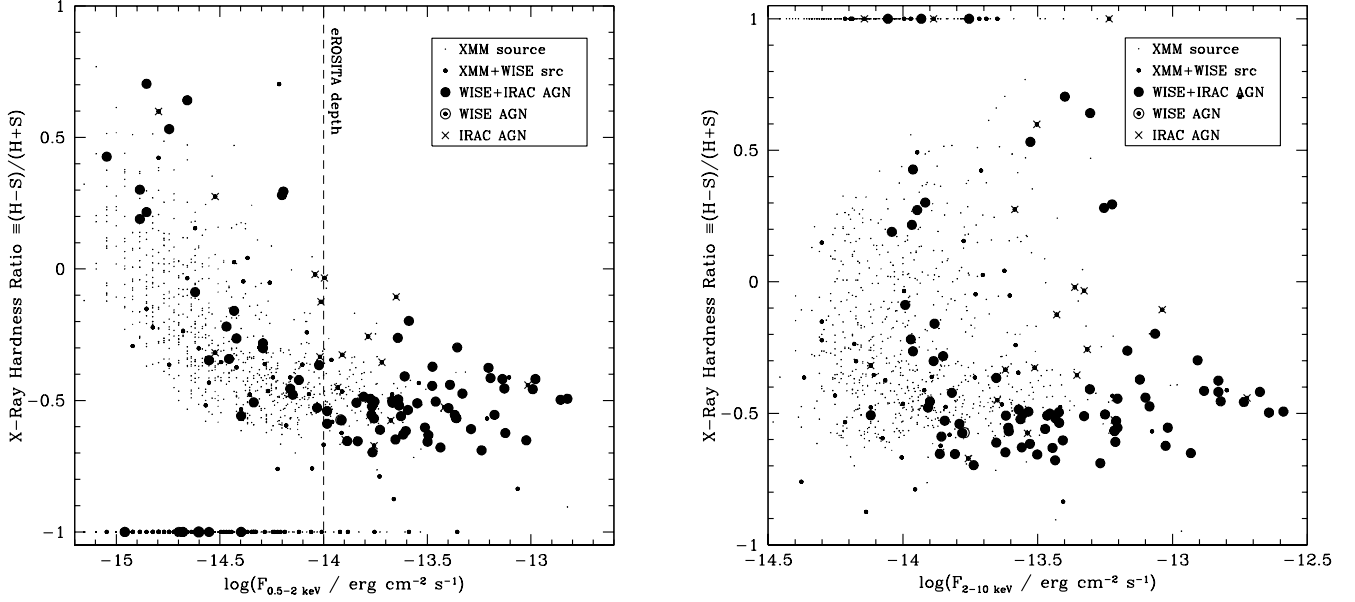


Fig. 10.— X-ray hardness ratio HR from *XMM-Newton* plotted against X-ray flux (right: soft-band, 0.5 – 2 keV; left: hard-band, 2 – 10 keV). Note that many (but not all) of the brightest hard X-ray sources are identified as AGN candidates by both the *WISE* criterion and by their IRAC colors (large black circles). The vertical dashed line in the left panel shows the expected soft-band point source sensitivity of the all-sky eROSITA survey; the hard-band point source sensitivity corresponds approximately to the right-hand axis of the high-energy panel. While the brightest soft X-ray sources are expected to also be identified by eROSITA, many *WISE*-selected AGN candidates are below the eROSITA flux limits. Conversely, eROSITA is expected to identify many lower luminosity AGN that are not identified as AGN candidates by *WISE*.

2010; Donley et al. 2012). *WISE* also detects a significant population of fainter, harder spectrum X-ray sources, below the sensitivity limit of eROSITA. These results, particularly Fig. 10, emphasizes the complementarity of X-ray and mid-infrared AGN selection: each selection technique identifies samples of AGN missed by the other technique.

Finally, using the greater statistics of the *XMM-Newton* sample, we consider if there are any trends between X-ray hardness ratio and mid-infrared $W1 - W2$ color. Though no strong correlation is evident, we do find the expected general trend of redder mid-infrared sources having harder X-ray spectra. Splitting the X-ray sample at $HR = 0$, the softer mid-infrared AGN candidates (e.g., $HR < 0$) have a mean *WISE* color of $\langle W1 - W2 \rangle = 1.18$. In contrast, the harder mid-infrared AGN candidates (e.g., $HR > 0$) have a mean *WISE* color of $\langle W1 - W2 \rangle = 1.32$. However, there are examples of very hard X-ray sources with relatively blue *WISE* colors, as well as very soft X-ray sources with relatively red *WISE* colors.

Table 2. *WISE*+IRAC AGN candidates undetected by *XMM-Newton*.

<i>WISE</i> ID	<i>i</i>	<i>W1</i>	<i>W2</i>	<i>W1</i> – <i>W2</i>	[5.8]–[8.0]	<i>z</i>	Notes
J095733.79+020943.1	19.66	16.33	15.08	1.25	1.07	1.441	SDSS QSO
J095736.56+020236.7	21.31	16.12	14.74	1.38	1.35	...	
J095752.32+022021.2	18.80	15.75	14.47	1.28	1.32	2.050	SDSS QSO
J095756.65+020719.5	20.27	15.67	14.87	0.80	0.78	[0.31]	
J095821.40+025259.0	19.53	15.67	14.50	1.17	1.29	...	
J095855.40+022037.4	19.43	15.41	14.59	0.82	1.39	[0.38]	bright galaxy
J095905.55+025145.0	19.85	15.95	15.08	0.87	1.35	...	
J095937.35+021905.9	22.30	16.00	14.70	1.30	1.17	0.927	
J095945.60+013032.2	20.34	15.97	15.01	0.97	0.99	1.106	SDSS QSO
J100006.19+015535.3	20.90	15.53	14.19	1.34	1.05	0.661	
J100008.42+020247.4	20.24	15.87	14.82	1.05	1.12	0.370	type-2 AGN
J100008.93+021440.5	18.93	15.93	14.72	1.20	1.26	2.536	QSO
J100013.51+013739.2	19.94	16.23	14.83	1.40	1.12	1.608	SDSS QSO
J100043.70+014202.5	21.77	15.89	14.89	1.00	1.40	0.741	
J100046.91+020726.5	21.86	14.87	13.14	1.73	1.18	1.158	faint
J100115.38+024231.4	20.44	16.21	15.02	1.20	1.13	...	
J100135.61+022104.8	25.11	16.98	14.97	2.01	1.49	...	faint
J100137.11+024650.6	21.58	16.36	14.87	1.49	1.16	0.143	
J100142.22+024330.7	22.69	15.74	14.02	1.72	1.28	[1.62]	
J100231.86+015242.3	21.01	15.85	14.68	1.17	0.99	...	
J100244.77+025651.5	20.26	15.86	14.72	1.14	1.09	...	
J100246.35+024609.6	19.08	15.63	14.69	0.94	1.37	...	
J100253.31+020222.1	20.84	15.32	14.24	1.08	1.61	0.902	
J100303.46+022632.0	20.69	15.68	14.82	0.85	1.14	...	
J100305.98+015704.0	19.46	14.63	12.91	1.72	1.32	0.370	type-2 AGN
J100322.00+014356.5	...	16.21	15.08	1.12	1.05	...	

Note. — Bracketed redshifts indicate photometric redshifts.

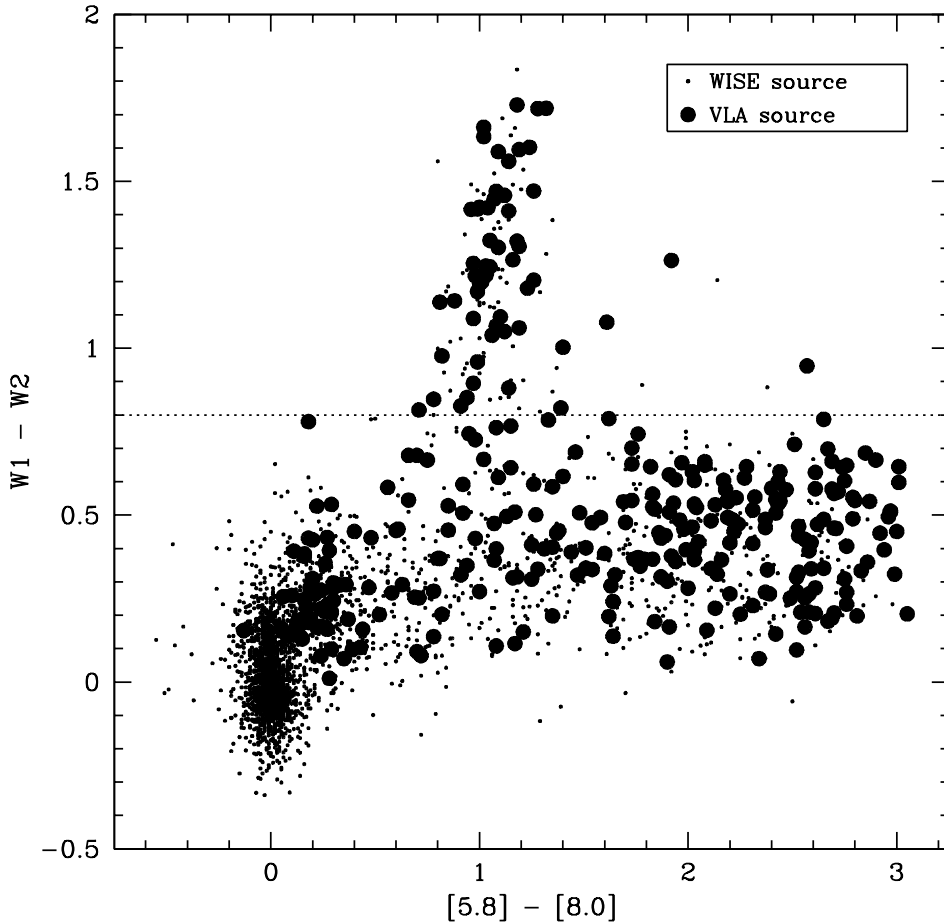


Fig. 11.— Mid-infrared color-color diagram of *WISE*-selected sources in the COSMOS field, with *WISE* $W1 - W2$ plotted against IRAC $[5.8] - [8.0]$. Plotted sources and symbols are as in Fig. 5, with large black circles added for all *WISE* sources with VLA counterparts in the VLA-COSMOS survey.

3.4. Radio Properties of WISE AGN

The Very Large Array (VLA) obtained deep radio images of the COSMOS field at 20 cm. The goals, observing strategy, and data reductions for this large program, called the VLA-COSMOS survey, are described in Schinnerer et al. (2007). The survey entailed nearly 350 hr of exposure time, primarily in the highest resolution, or A, configuration. The Large project imaged the full 2 deg² COSMOS field with a resolution of 1''5 to a sensitivity of $\sim 11\mu\text{Jy}$ (1σ) (Bondi et al. 2008). We use the joint catalog of Schinnerer et al. (2010), which combines an improved analysis of the Large project with data from the Deep project that doubled the integration time in the central 0.84 deg² region of the survey. The Joint catalog includes 2865 sources, of which 131 consist of multiple components.

We match the full Joint catalog to the full *WISE* source list of 3618 sources using a $1''.5$ matching radius. We find 333 matches, of which 33 have multiple components in the VLA data. Fig. 11 shows the mid-infrared colors of the VLA sources, which shows many radio-detected sources on both sides of our $W1 - W2 = 0.8$ color cut. This is unsurprising, as these extremely deep radio data detect emission related to stellar processes (e.g., supernova remnants) as well as AGN activity at a range of Eddington ratios. Considering the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates, 55 of the 130 candidates (42%) have radio matches; five of these are flagged as consisting of multiple components in the radio data. Of the 123 AGN candidates identified by both *WISE* and IRAC, 52 (42%) are detected by these very deep radio data. For the *WISE*-selected AGN not flagged as likely AGN by IRAC, three (43%) are detected by the VLA. All of these fractions are much higher than the 8% of sources with $W1 - W2 < 0.8$ which are detected by the VLA-COSMOS survey.

Assuming a typical quasar radio spectral index $\alpha = -0.5$ ($S_\nu \propto \nu^\alpha$) and adopting the Gregg et al. (1996) cutoff value for the 1.4 GHz specific luminosity, $L_{1.4\text{GHz}} = 10^{32.5} h_{50}^{-2} \text{ erg s}^{-1} \text{ Hz}^{-1}$ ($\approx 10^{24} h_{50}^{-2} \text{ W Hz}^{-1} \text{ sr}^{-1}$), to discriminate radio-loud and AGN radio-quiet populations, only two of 98 the *WISE*-selected AGN with spectroscopic redshifts are radio-loud¹³. The results are unchanged if we assume $\alpha = -0.8$, as might be more typical for quasars without the jet aligned along our line of sight. Both of these sources are SDSS quasars at $z > 1$ (WISE J095821.65+024628.2 at $z = 1.405$ and WISE J095908.32+024309.6 at $z = 1.318$). These two sources come from a total of 45 *WISE*-selected AGN that are optically bright and have spectroscopy from the SDSS; all are classified as broad-lined, and 35 are at $z > 1$ implying that they are clearly luminous quasars. Considering just this SDSS subsample of *WISE*-selected AGN, our results are statistically consistent with the canonical value of $\sim 10\%$ of quasars being radio-loud (e.g., Stern et al. 2000b). However, the fact that none of the 53 other sources with spectroscopic redshifts are radio-loud is surprising, suggesting that the radio-loud fraction might be different for type 2 AGN. We note, however, that Zakamska et al. (2004) found no change in the radio-loud fraction for their sample of SDSS-selected obscured quasars.

Note that radio-loud AGN do not fall below the 5σ VLA-COSMOS sensitivity until beyond $z \sim 10$; e.g., the survey is sensitive enough to detect all radio-loud AGN that *WISE* is likely to detect. All of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates without redshifts that were detected by the VLA-COSMOS survey have $S_\nu < 0.72$ mJy, implying that they would have to be at $z > 3.4$ in order to be radio-loud.

¹³For consistency with previous work in terms of defining the boundary between radio-loud and radio-quiet populations, 1.4 GHz specific luminosity is calculated for an Einstein-de Sitter cosmology; e.g., see Stern et al. (2000b).

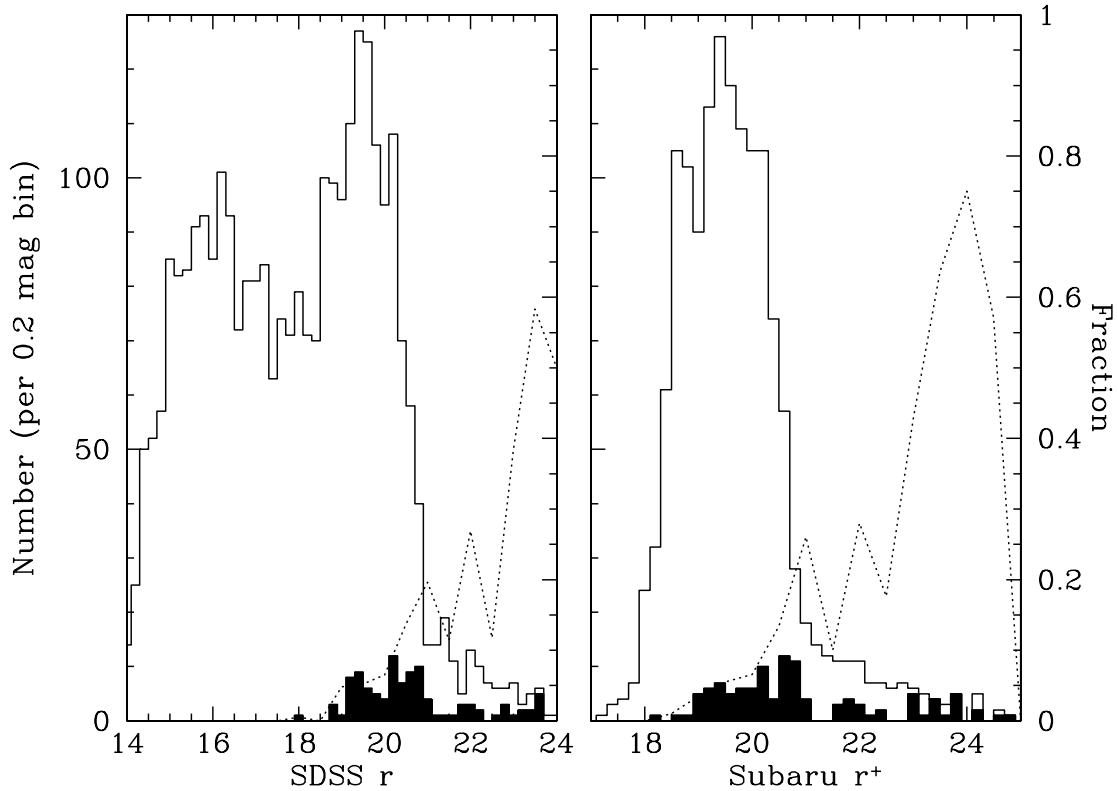


Fig. 12.— Histograms of SDSS r -band (left) and Subaru r^+ -band (right) optical magnitudes of all *WISE*-selected sources in the COSMOS field (open histogram). Solid histograms show distributions for *WISE*-selected AGN candidates. Dotted lines show the fraction of *WISE* sources that are AGN candidates as a function of optical magnitude (in 0.5 mag bins). While very few sources brighter than ~ 19 th mag are AGN candidates, the fraction increases to $> 50\%$ at the faintest magnitudes.

3.5. Optical Magnitudes and Colors of WISE AGN

We next consider the optical properties of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates. Fig. 12 shows the r -band magnitude distributions of all *WISE* sources in the COSMOS field (open histogram) as well as the AGN candidates with $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ (solid histogram). All photometry is in the AB system and comes from the COSMOS photometry catalog of Capak et al. (2007), which is available through IRSA. The left panel shows r -band photometry from the second data release (DR2) of the SDSS (Abazajian et al. 2004). Objects as bright as 10th mag have good photometry in the SDSS imaging, and the imaging depth, defined as the 95% completeness limit for point sources, is $r \sim 22.2$. Similar data is available over more than 11,000 deg^2 . However, many of the *WISE* sources are fainter than this limiting depth, so in the right panel of Fig. 12 we show the Subaru r^+ photometry in the COSMOS field obtained with the Suprime-Cam instrument (Komiya et al. 2003). These data reach a 5σ depth ($3''$ aperture) of 26.6 and detect all of the *WISE*-selected AGN

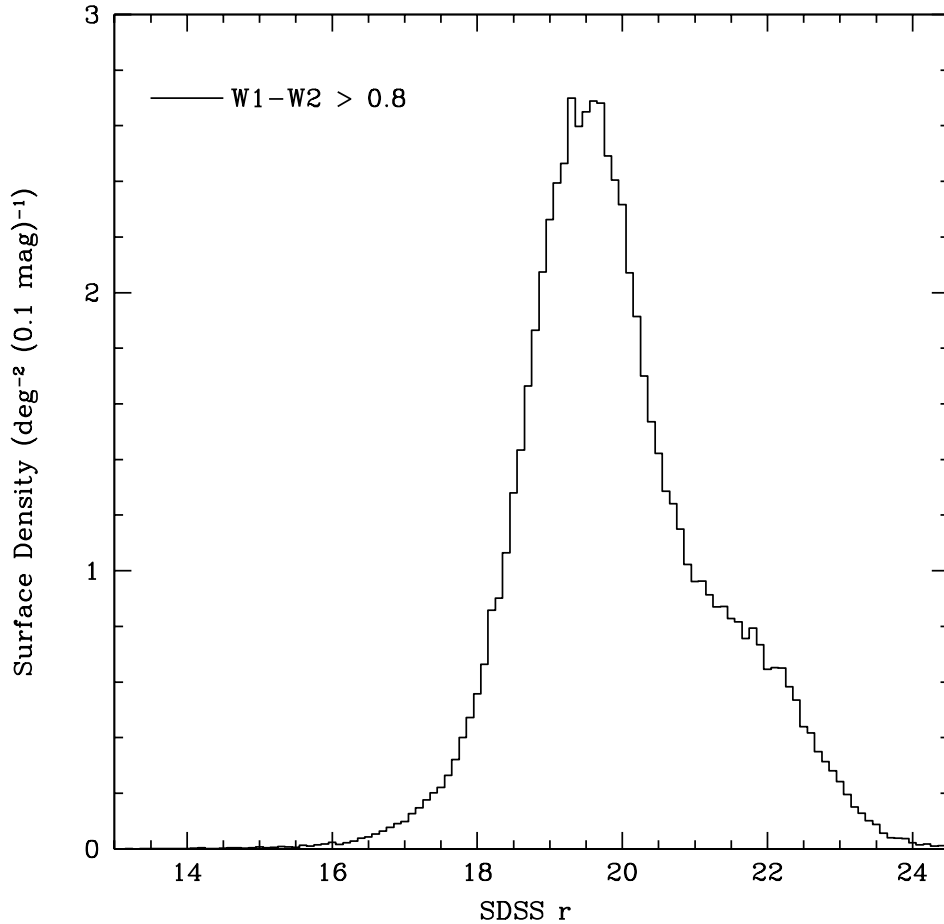


Fig. 13.— Distribution of r -band magnitudes for *WISE*-selected AGN candidates identified over 4000 deg² of the SDSS.

candidates. Many of the brighter sources in the Subaru data are unresolved, leading to saturation issues. This causes the truncation seen at $r^+ \lesssim 18$.

Fig. 12 shows that very few of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates are brighter than $r \sim 18$, and they represent less than 5% of the *WISE* source population at bright optical magnitudes. However, the AGN candidates represent an increasing fraction of the optically fainter *WISE* sources, accounting for $\sim 20\%$ of *WISE* sources at $r \sim 21$ and more than 50% of *WISE* sources with $r \gtrsim 23$. In order to explore the optical brightnesses of *WISE*-selected AGN candidates with higher fidelity, we identified AGN candidates over 4000 deg² of the SDSS (c.f., Donoso et al. 2012; Yan et al. 2012). Fig. 13 shows the resultant r -band distribution. While the majority of AGN candidates are well detected in the SDSS imaging, their optical brightness distribution peaks at $r \sim 19.5$, making them fainter than the typical spectroscopic limits of SDSS, $i \sim 19.1$ for quasars and $r \sim 17.8$ for galaxies (as discussed in the following section, approximately half of our *WISE*-selected AGN candidates are spatially resolved).

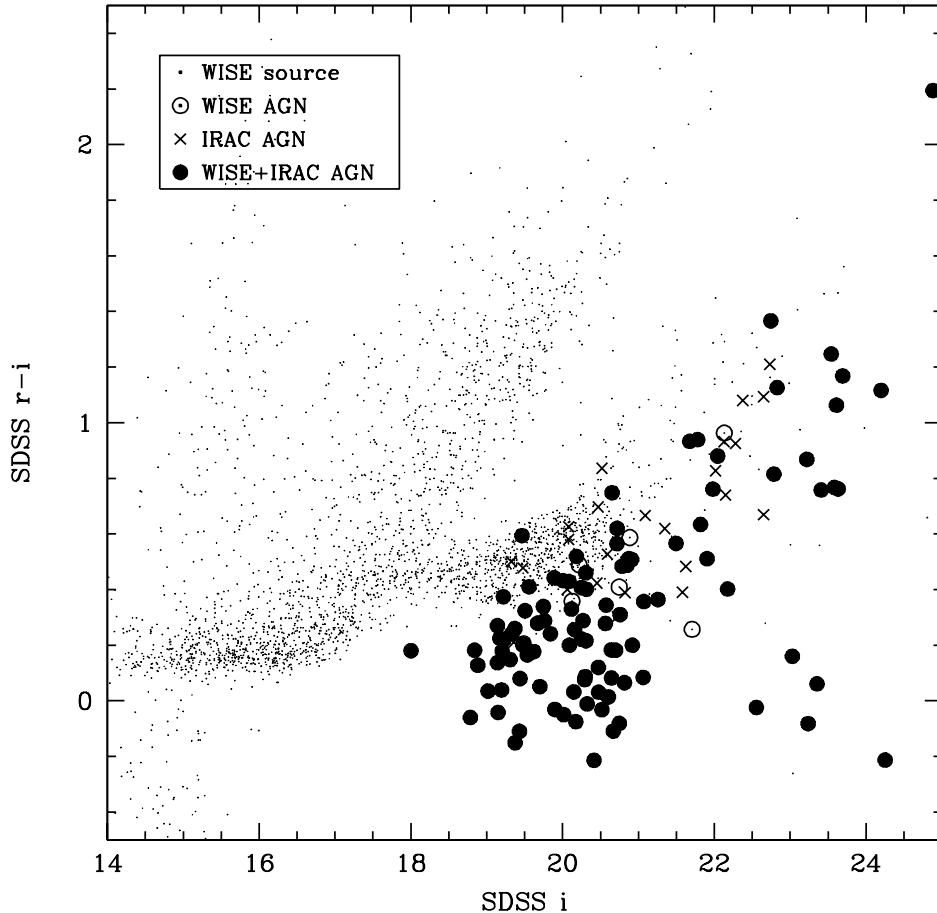


Fig. 14.— Optical color-magnitude diagram of *WISE* sources in the COSMOS field. Optical photometry is from SDSS, and symbols are indicated in the upper left. *WISE*-selected AGN candidates tend to optical colors that are bluer than typical field sources, though a significant fraction of the AGN candidates overlap with the field population.

Fig. 14 shows an optical color-magnitude diagram of *WISE* sources. At bright magnitudes, the distribution is dominated by Galactic stars with $r-i \sim 0.1$, while a second galaxy sequence becomes evident at $r \gtrsim 18$. Mid-infrared AGN candidates are, on average, bluer than typical galaxies, though the color distribution clearly overlaps with the galaxy sample. AGN candidates identified by both *WISE* and *Spitzer*/IRAC, which represent the most robust AGN sample with the highest rate of X-ray detections, tend to be bluer than galaxies at $i \lesssim 21$, though at fainter magnitudes where obscured AGN become more prevalent, the distribution fans out. This is partially due to photometric errors, but also because a large fraction of the AGN candidates have colors similar to galaxies. Not surprisingly, AGN candidates identified by *Spitzer* but not by *WISE*— e.g., sources at the blue corner of the Stern et al. (2005) wedge and close to the galaxy locus in mid-infrared color-color space — tend to have galaxy-like optical colors.

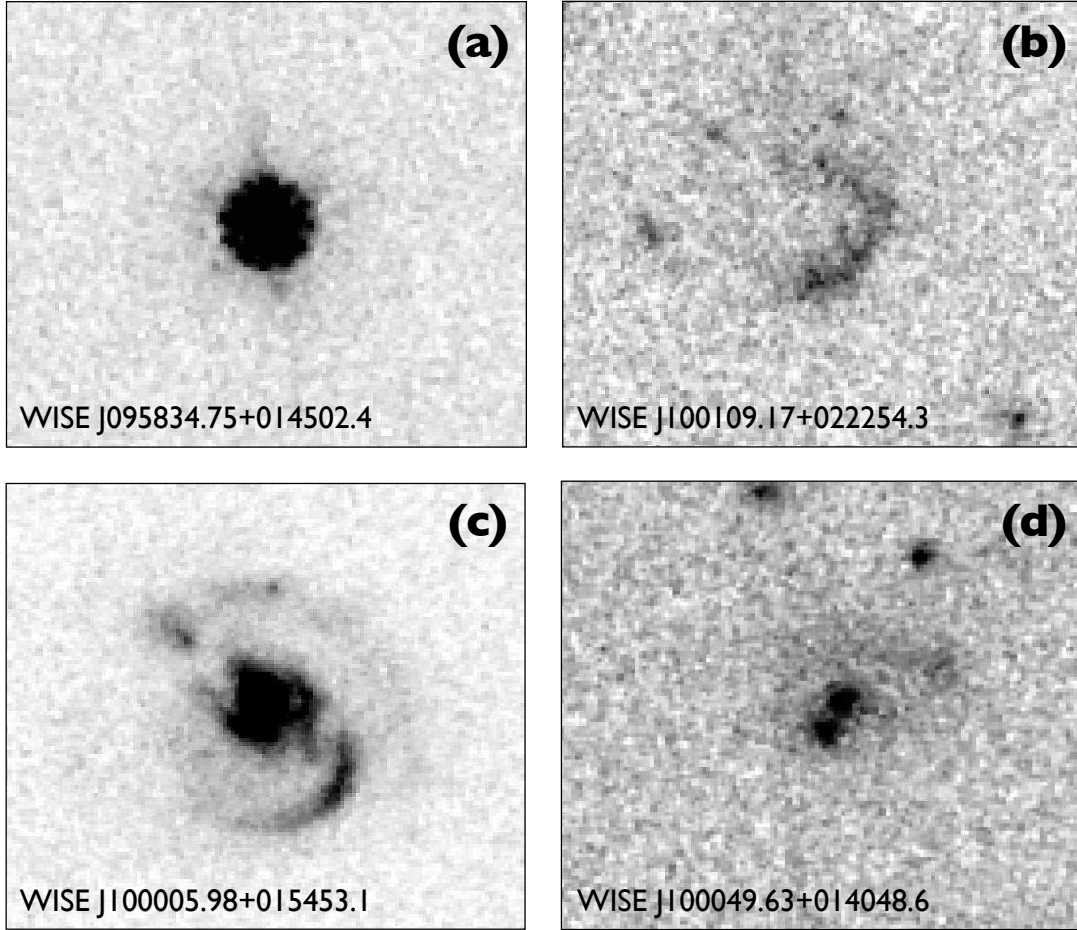


Fig. 15.— *Hubble*/ACS I_{814} images of four *WISE*-selected AGN in the COSMOS field, showing the range of optical morphologies. Approximately half of the sources are unresolved point sources (e.g., panel a). The other half are spatially resolved (e.g., panels b-d), sometimes with rather faint optical magnitudes. All four sources shown here are identified as candidate AGN by both *WISE* and IRAC color criteria. Images are $\sim 4''$ on a side (e.g., smaller than the *WISE* PSF), with North up and East to the left.

3.6. Morphologies of WISE AGN

Conventional wisdom states that the most luminous AGN in the universe are associated with unresolved point sources at optical wavelengths. While this is true for the vast majority of unobscured, type 1 quasars, this is not the case for obscured, type 2 quasars. For instance, luminous high-redshift radio galaxies often have a clumpy, irregular morphology at rest-frame ultraviolet wavelengths, with the emission generally elongated and aligned with the radio source axis (e.g., McCarthy et al. 1987). At rest-frame optical wavelengths, where stars dominate the galaxy luminosity, the hosts of most luminous radio galaxies are normal elliptical galaxies with $r^{1/4}$ -law light

profiles (e.g., Zirm et al. 2003).

The cornerstone data set for the COSMOS survey is its wide-field *Hubble Space Telescope* Advanced Camera for Surveys (ACS) imaging (Scoville et al. 2007; Koekemoer et al. 2007). With 583 single-orbit F814W (I_{814} hereafter) observations, these data cover (or define) the 1.8 deg^2 COSMOS field and constitute the largest contiguous *Hubble* imaging survey to date. The data are extremely sensitive, with $0''.09$ resolution (FWHM) and reaching a 50% completeness limit of $I_{814} = 26.0$ (AB) for sources $0''.5$ in diameter.

Griffith & Stern (2010) have recently analyzed the optical morphologies of AGN in the COSMOS field identified from a variety of methods: radio selection, X-ray selection, and mid-infrared selection (see also Gabor et al. 2009). They find that the radio-selected AGN are likely to be hosted by early-type galaxies, while X-ray and mid-infrared selected AGN are more often associated with point sources and disk galaxies. Considering just the brighter X-ray and mid-infrared subsamples, approximately half of the AGN are optically unresolved and a third are associated with disk galaxies. These morphological results conform with the results of Hickox et al. (2009) who studied the colors and large-scale clustering of AGN, and found a general association of radio-selected AGN with “red sequence” galaxies (an old, well-known result; e.g., Matthews et al. 1964), mid-infrared selected AGN are associated with “blue cloud” galaxies, and X-ray selected AGN straddle these samples in the “green valley”.

We find similar results here. Of the 130 *WISE*-selected AGN candidates, 94 are located within the portion of COSMOS imaged by ACS. A bit more than half (52/94, or 55%) of the sources are spatially resolved; the other AGN candidates are associated with point sources. As an aside, we note that one of the contaminants, WISE J100050.63+024901.7 was flagged by Faure et al. (2008) as one of the 20 most likely strong lensing systems in the COSMOS field (see also Jackson 2008). The ACS I_{814} image of this system shows four faint arcs surrounding a bright early-type galaxy, with a radial separation of $1''.9$. Inspection of the IRAC images for this system shows that the mid-infrared data are still dominated by the optically bright lensing galaxy.

Fig. 15 shows *Hubble*/ACS I_{814} images of four example *WISE*-selected AGN. All four examples were also identified as AGN candidates by their IRAC colors. Several are X-ray and/or radio sources as well. Panel (a) shows WISE J095834.75+014502.4, a bright SDSS quasar at $z = 1.889$. It is unresolved in the ACS image; approximately half of the *WISE* AGN candidates have similar morphologies. Panel (b) shows WISE J100109.21+022254.2, one of the optically faintest *WISE*-selected AGN candidates in the COSMOS field, with $I_{814} = 22.9$. As discussed in the next section, we were unable to obtain a redshift for this source from deep Keck spectroscopy, though subsequent to our observations, Brusa et al. (2010) reported that this source is as a narrow-lined AGN at $z = 1.582$. Panels (c) and (d) show two $z \sim 0.9$ type 2 (e.g., narrow-lined) AGN from Trump et al. (2007). The former is WISE J100005.99+015453.3, which is a spiral galaxy with a very bright nucleus. The latter is WISE J100013.42+021400.4, which has a more irregular morphology.

Fig. 16 presents a color-magnitude diagram of *WISE* sources in the COSMOS field, with

optical-to-mid-infrared color plotted against $4.6\ \mu\text{m}$ brightness ($W2$). For the AGN candidates, we only plot the $\sim 70\%$ of sources covered by the ACS imaging. There are several things to note from this plot. First, the *WISE*-only AGN candidates (e.g., *WISE*-selected AGN candidates not identified as AGN candidates from their *Spitzer* colors) clearly reside on the right side of Fig. 16, with no contaminants brighter than $W2 = 14.8$. This implies that caution should be applied before extending our simple *WISE* color criterion to fainter limits. Indeed, in Assef et al. (2012) we investigate the interloper fraction as a function of $W2$ magnitude and derive a magnitude-dependent *WISE* AGN selection criterion applicable to higher ecliptic latitude (e.g., deeper) portions of the *WISE* survey.

Second, optically unresolved AGN candidates tend to have bluer $r - W2$ colors, consistent with the expectation that they suffer less extinction at optical wavelengths. Quantitatively, the unresolved *WISE*+IRAC AGN candidates in Fig. 16 have $\langle r - W2 \rangle = 5.18$. Similarly selected sources that are resolved in the *Hubble* imaging have $\langle r - W2 \rangle = 7.29$. The unresolved AGN candidates are also slightly brighter, with $\langle W2 \rangle = 14.54$ as compared to $\langle W2 \rangle = 14.69$ for the resolved *WISE*+IRAC AGN candidates. Importantly, however, we note that both resolved and unresolved sources are found across the full $W2$ range probed.

Finally, we also consider the optical properties of the *WISE*+IRAC AGN candidates that are undetected by *XMM-Newton* (Table 2). These sources have an even fainter median mid-IR brightness, $\langle W2 \rangle = 14.72$, and also have redder optical-to-mid-IR colors than typical *WISE*+IRAC AGN candidates. Quantitatively, $\langle r - W2 \rangle = 6.58$ for the X-ray-undetected AGN candidates, while $\langle r - W2 \rangle = 5.85$ for the X-ray detected *WISE*+IRAC AGN sample. This is consistent with the X-ray undetected sources being associated with more heavily obscured AGN, diminishing both their optical and X-ray fluxes.

3.7. Redshift Distribution of WISE AGN

In order to understand the redshift distribution and properties of *WISE*-selected AGN candidates, we have both matched the candidate list to publically available spectroscopy in the COSMOS field and obtained new observations. Published spectroscopy come from several papers: bright targets have spectroscopic redshifts from the SDSS (Abazajian et al. 2009); Prescott et al. (2006) reports on MMT/Hectospec follow-up of optically selected quasar candidates in COSMOS; Lilly et al. (2007) reports on zCOSMOS, a large VLT/VIMOS *I*-band magnitude-limited survey of the COSMOS field; Trump et al. (2007) and Trump et al. (2009) report on Magellan/IMACS spectroscopy of X-ray- and radio-selected AGN candidates in the COSMOS field; and Brusa et al. (2010) report on spectroscopy of X-ray sources from the *XMM-Newton* wide-field survey of the COSMOS field, synthesizing both previously published results and new spectroscopy from Keck.

We obtained additional spectroscopy on UT 2010 March 12-15 using the Low Resolution Imaging Spectrometer (LRIS; Oke et al. 1995) and the DEep Imaging Multi-Object Spectrograph

Fig. 16.— Optical-to-mid-infrared vs. mid-infrared color-magnitude diagram of *WISE*-selected sources in the COSMOS field. Optical photometry is from SDSS, and symbols are indicated in the upper left. Only those AGN candidates covered by the COSMOS *Hubble* images are plotted, and they are flagged by their ACS morphologies.

(DEIMOS; Faber et al. 2003). We observed three Keck slitmasks in the COSMOS field. On UT 2010 March 12 we observed **cos10b** for 5200 s using the dual-beam LRIS instrument. We used the $400 \ell \text{ mm}^{-1}$ grism on the blue arm of the spectrograph (blazed at 3400 \AA ; resolving power $R \equiv \lambda/\Delta\lambda \sim 600$), the $400 \ell \text{ mm}^{-1}$ grating on the red arm of the spectrograph (blazed at 8500 \AA ; $R \sim 700$) and 6800 \AA dichroic. On UT 2010 March 13 we observed **cos10a** for 1200 s using LRIS. The red CCD was non-functional that night, so we channeled all of the light to the blue arm of the spectrograph and again used the $400 \ell \text{ mm}^{-1}$ grism blazed at 3400 \AA . On UT 2010 March 14 we observed **cos10d** for 3600 s with DEIMOS in cloudy conditions, using the $600 \ell \text{ mm}^{-1}$ grating (blazed at 7500 \AA ; $R \sim 1600$) and the 4000 \AA order-blocking filter. Masks all used $\sim 1''.2$ wide slitlets. Data reduction followed standard procedures, and we flux calibrated the data using observations of standard stars from Massey & Gronwall (1990). Note that the DEIMOS data were

taken in non-photometric conditions, resulting in an uncertainty in the flux scale of those sources.

Target selection was done prior to access to the *WISE* data in the COSMOS field, though we had already anticipated that red $W1 - W2$ colors would be an effective method to identify a large population of AGN. We sought to test that hypothesis using *Spitzer*/IRAC imaging from the S-COSMOS survey (Sanders et al. 2007), assuming that $W1 \sim [3.6]$ and $W2 \sim [4.5]$. Additional targets were selected using the Stern et al. (2005) IRAC AGN wedge selection criteria. Fig. 17 and Table 3 present the results for the six COSMOS targets that subsequently were found to match our $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ AGN candidate selection criterion. All six would also be selected by the Stern et al. (2005) IRAC criteria. Table 4 in the Appendix presents the results for the additional COSMOS targets observed on these masks. Our new Keck results are occasionally slightly discrepant with previous results, but typically with $\Delta z \leq 0.01$. The signal-to-noise ratio of these new data are quite high and the data were taken at relatively high spectral dispersion, suggesting that these redshifts should take precedence over previous results.

Four of the sources show prominent AGN features, such as broadened Mg II 2800 emission. WISE J100036.06+022830.5 does not show obvious AGN features; the spectrum shows narrow emission lines from [O II], [Ne III], $H\beta$, and [O III], as well as Balmer absorption lines indicative of a relatively young stellar population. We find $\log ([\text{O III}] / H\beta) \sim 0.12$, which is consistent with both star-forming and AGN activity in the Baldwin et al. (1981) diagram; spectral features redward of our data are required to distinguish the principle line excitation mechanism. We did not obtain a redshift for WISE J100109.23+022254.5 with our data, though Brusa et al. (2010) identify this source as a narrow-lined AGN $z = 1.582$ on the basis of their deep Keck/DEIMOS spectroscopy; the quality of the redshift is not indicated. Our spectroscopy does not show any features such as redshifted C IV emission or absorption to confirm that redshift. However, we note that strongest feature at this redshift is likely to be [O II] emission at 9623 Å. This is beyond the wavelength coverage of our Keck spectroscopy.

Fig. 18 presents the distribution of spectroscopic redshifts for the *WISE* AGN candidates. We have spectroscopic redshifts for 101 of the 130 candidates (72%); the median redshift is $\langle z \rangle = 1.11$. Seven of these candidates are from outside the IRAC AGN wedge, four of which have spectroscopic redshifts. Two are broad-lined quasars at $z \sim 1$; the other two are galaxies at $z = 0.27$ and $z = 0.75$ from zCOSMOS. This suggests that the 95% reliability rate derived in § 3.1 is actually a lower limit; some of the *WISE*-selected candidates are indeed AGN despite not being identified as such by their IRAC colors.

4. Conclusions

We use the deep, public, multiwavelength data in the $\sim 2 \text{ deg}^2$ COSMOS survey to motivate a very simple, empirical mid-infrared criterion to identify AGN candidates with the *WISE* satellite. Selecting sources with $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ identifies 61.9 ± 5.4 AGN candidates per deg^2 at the 10σ

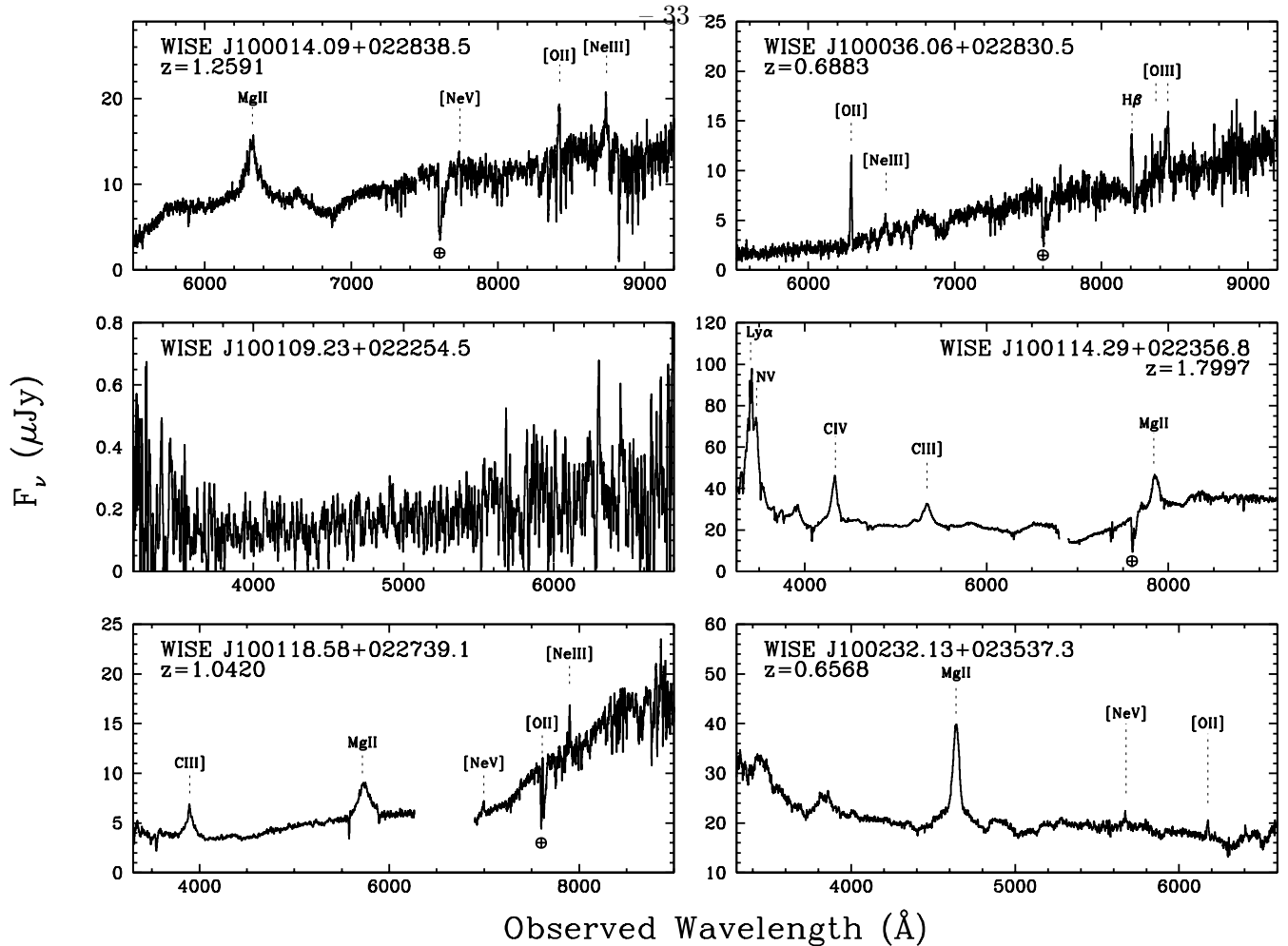


Fig. 17.— Results from Keck spectroscopy of sources identified as AGN candidates based on their *WISE* colors, obtained in March 2010. All six sources here are also selected as AGN candidates based on their *Spitzer*/IRAC colors (Stern et al. 2005). Prominent emission lines are marked, as is the telluric A-band absorption at 7600 Å. DEIMOS spectra (see Table 3) were obtained in non-photometric conditions; the relative calibration of such sources should be reliable, though the absolute scale is uncertain.

depth of the *WISE* COSMOS data (e.g., 160 μJy at 4.6 μm). Using deep *Spitzer* data in this field and adopting the mid-infrared two-color AGN selection criteria of Stern et al. (2005) as the truth sample, this simple *WISE* color cut is approximately 78% complete and 95% reliable at identifying AGN. Of the seven ‘contaminants’ in the COSMOS field identified as AGN candidates using our new *WISE* color criterion but not selected as an AGN candidate from the *Spitzer* color criteria, two are identified as broad-lined quasars, implying that the reliability of this simple color selection is better than 95% at the depth of the *WISE* COSMOS observations, $W2 \sim 15.0$. We caution, however, that COSMOS, by design, is at very low ecliptic latitude implying that its *WISE* coverage is shallower than average. In deeper *WISE* fields, this simple color cut suffers more contamination. Here we show that the combined criteria $W1 - W2 \geq 0.8$ and $W2 \leq 15$ robustly identifies an

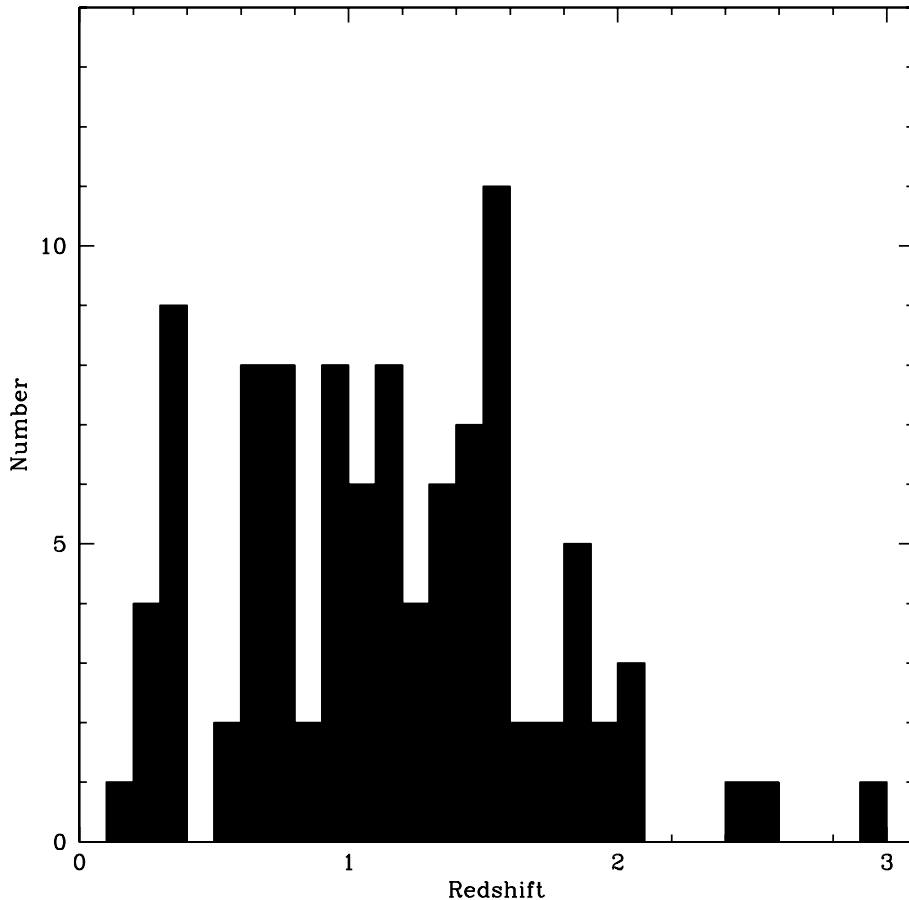


Fig. 18.— Histogram of spectroscopic redshifts for *WISE*-selected AGN candidates in the COSMOS field. Of the 130 such candidates, 101 have spectroscopic redshifts. The median redshift is $\langle z \rangle = 1.11$.

extremely robust, highly complete AGN sample. In Assef et al. (2012), we use the deeper, wider-area Boötes field to derive a $W2$ -dependent AGN color selection criterion that is applicable in deeper areas of the *WISE* all-sky survey.

Forty-six of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates in the COSMOS field are known broad-lined quasars previously identified by the SDSS (e.g., 21.9 type-1 quasars per deg^2). The median optical-to-mid-IR color of these type-1 AGN is $\langle i - W2 \rangle = 4.75$. The 10σ $W2$ depth that we applied to the *WISE* COSMOS observations corresponds to $W2 = 15.05$, implying that our mid-IR *WISE* AGN selection should identify unobscured quasars to an optical depth of $i \sim 19.8$. Richards et al. (2006b) combines the SDSS and 2QZ/6QZ quasar surveys to study the demographics and evolution of quasars below the SDSS photometric limits. They find ~ 20 type-1 quasars per deg^2 to this depth. Assuming that the other ~ 40 *WISE*-selected AGN candidates per deg^2 are type-2 quasars, the implied obscured-to-unobscured ratio is $\sim 2 : 1$ at these bright depths. This result is in-line

with expected ratios required to explain the intensity and hardness of the cosmic X-ray background (e.g., Treister et al. 2004; Treister & Urry 2005; Gilli et al. 2007; Ballantyne et al. 2011).

All of the *WISE*-selected AGN candidates in COSMOS have optical identifications. Approximately half are spatially resolved. *WISE*-selected AGN tend to be amongst the optically faintest *WISE* sources, accounting for essentially none of the *WISE* sources brighter than $r = 18$, $\sim 20\%$ of *WISE* sources at $r = 21$, and rising to $> 50\%$ of sources fainter than $r = 23$. The r -band distribution of *WISE*-selected AGN candidates peaks at $r \sim 19.5$, but has a significant tail to fainter magnitudes. Considering the 101 candidates with spectroscopic redshifts, the median redshift is $\langle z \rangle = 1.11$.

Most ($\sim 75\%$) of the robust *WISE* AGN candidates covered by the deep *Chandra* and *XMM-Newton* imaging of COSMOS are detected at X-ray energies, while few of the expected contaminants are. Of particular note is the $\sim 25\%$ of robust AGN candidates identified in 90 s *WISE* full-sky images that are missed in extremely deep, 60+ ks pencil-beam surveys by these flagship-class soft ($\lesssim 10$ keV) X-ray missions. Such sources are expected to be heavily obscured, luminous, Compton-thick AGN. In the next year, the *NuSTAR* satellite will map the COSMOS field in the 5 – 80 keV hard X-ray energy range, reaching depths ~ 200 more sensitive than previous surveys in this energy range. We expect that several of the obscured *WISE* AGN candidates will be detected by *NuSTAR*.

The 130 *WISE*-selected AGN candidates identified in the COSMOS field is sufficiently large to characterize general properties of the population, and the expectation is that this selection criterion will be valuable for a wide range of future studies, such as understanding the energetics of sources identified at other wavelengths (e.g., Bond et al. 2012), comparing the environments of type 1 and type 2 AGN, and probing the role of AGN in galaxy formation and evolution. A companion paper, Assef et al. (2012), uses nearly an order of magnitude larger sample of *WISE*-selected AGN in the ~ 10 deg² Boötes field to study the evolutionary properties of this population.

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A. Additional Spectroscopic Redshifts in the COSMOS Field

The three slitmasks that we observed were designed to target *WISE*-selected AGN candidates in the COSMOS field, though the low source density of such sources allowed for additional spectroscopic targets. We primarily filled out the masks with IRAC-selected AGN candidates, using the two-color criteria of Stern et al. (2005). Given the interest and use of the COSMOS field by a broad community, we include those additional sources here.

Table 4 presents the results for 26 COSMOS sources for which we obtained redshifts; the six targeted sources are listed in Table 3. We include the quality (“Q”) of each spectroscopic redshift. Quality flag “A” signifies an unambiguous redshift determination, typically relying upon multiple emission or absorption features. Quality flag “B” signifies a less certain redshift determination, such as the robust detection of an isolated emission line, but where the identification of the line is uncertain (e.g., Stern et al. 2000a). Quality flag “B” might also be assigned to a source with a robust redshift identification, but where some uncertainty remains as to the astrometric identity of that spectroscopic source. We consider the quality “B” results likely to be correct, but additional spectroscopy would be beneficial. All of the spectroscopic redshifts in Table 3 are of quality “A”.

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Table 3. Results of 2010 March Keck Observations.

I_{814}	R.A.	Dec.	z	Slitmask(s)	Notes
20.52	10:00:14.09	+02:28:38.5	1.2591	D[6]	QSO: MgII,[OII],[NeIII]
20.47	10:00:36.06	+02:28:30.5	0.6883	D[5]	[OII],H β ,[OIII]
22.91	10:01:09.23	+02:22:54.5		B,D[2]	faint blue cont.; $z = 1.582$ in Brusa et al. (2010)
19.16	10:01:14.29	+02:23:56.8	1.7997	B,D[1]	QSO: Ly α ,CIV,CIII],MgII
20.04	10:01:18.58	+02:27:39.1	1.0420	B	QSO: CIV,CIII],MgII,[NeV],[OII],[NeIII]
18.85	10:02:32.13	+02:35:37.3	0.6568	A	QSO: MgII,[NeIV],[OII]; jet?
19.30	10:00:22.79	+02:25:30.6	0.3482	D[3]	H α

Note. — Masks A and B were observed with LRIS. Mask D was observed with DEIMOS; the bracketed numbers indicate the DEIMOS slitlet number. All derived redshifts are of very high quality ($Q = A$; see Appendix A).

Table 4. Additional Results from Keck Observations.

I_{814}	R.A.	Dec.	z	Q	Slitmask(s)	Notes
17.32	10:00:11.83	+02:26:23.1	0.440	A	D[35]	[OII],[NeIII],H ζ ,He,H δ ,H γ ,H β ,[OIII]
16.26	10:00:14.89	+02:27:17.9	0.728	A	D[38]	[OII],H β ,[OIII]
19.30	10:00:22.79	+02:25:30.6	0.349	A	D[3]	CaHK,H α ,[NII]
17.99	10:00:24.28	+02:27:36.2	1.243	B	D[39]	[OII]
17.14	10:00:24.51	+02:26:18.1	1.129	A	D[34]	[OII]
18.36	10:00:28.56	+02:27:25.8	0.248	A	D[4]	CaH,H γ ,H β ,[OIII],H α ,[NII]
17.15	10:00:29.55	+02:26:35.9	0.348	B	D[36]	[OII],H β ,[OIII],H α ,[NII] (could be serendip)
16.93	10:00:32.46	+02:27:59.3	1.405	B	D[41]	[OII]
16.80	10:00:33.23	+02:27:59.3	0.981	B	D[42]	[OII]
17.93	10:00:44.50	+02:23:54.0	1.299	B	D[17]	[OII],CaHK
18.43	10:00:50.15	+02:26:18.5	3.730	A	D[33]	QSO: Ly α ,CIV
18.56	10:00:50.58	+02:23:29.3	3.093	A	D[13]	QSO: Ly α ,CIV,CIII]
19.08	10:00:56.65	+02:26:35.5	0.344	A	B,D[0]	MgII absn,[OII],CaH,H γ ,H β ,[OIII],H α ,[NII]
17.55	10:00:58.07	+02:26:16.8	0.425	A	D[32]	[OII],H β ,[OIII],H α
16.55	10:00:58.70	+02:25:56.2	0.694	A	D[28]	QSO: [NeV],[OII],H β ,[OIII]
17.09	10:00:59.00	+02:24:17.9	1.193	B	B	[OII]
19.15	10:00:59.81	+02:24:30.7	0.541	A	B	[OII]
16.94	10:01:08.35	+02:23:42.0	1.930	A	B,D[15]	QSO: Ly α ,CIV,CIII],MgII
18.22	10:01:08.65	+02:23:14.1	0.503	A	D[12]	[OII],D4000
16.52	10:01:13.93	+02:25:48.1	0.373	A	B	QSO: broad MgII,[NeV],[OII],H α
17.18	10:01:14.68	+02:24:49.5	1.656	A	B	LBG: CII,CIV,[OII]
16.36	10:01:17.00	+02:27:31.2	0.518	A	B	H α
16.25	10:02:17.42	+02:29:59.7	1.100	A	A	QSO: CIV,CIII]; odd broad lines at ~ 1650 Å
17.56	10:02:28.18	+02:30:15.4	0.344	B	A	[OII]
15.23	10:02:29.89	+02:32:25.1	0.431	A	A	AGN: [NeV],[OII],[NeIII],[OIII]
17.76	10:02:31.90	+02:35:07.4	0.880	A	A	AGN: CIII],MgII

Note. — Q indicates the quality of the redshift (see text for details). Masks A and B were observed with LRIS. Mask D was observed with DEIMOS; the bracketed numbers indicate the DEIMOS slitlet number.

